

Israel on alert for parcel bomb offensive

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israeli security forces went on heightened alert Sunday, fearing that two weekend parcel bomb explosions could signal a new offensive by Palestinian activists, officials said.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu also focused his weekly cabinet meeting Sunday on the security issue following five days of violent protests on the West Bank which erupted after Israeli soldiers killed three Palestinian workers at an army checkpoint, Israel Radio said.

Police officials said they had deployed extra patrols in urban

areas and set up roadblocks leading into the main cities in a bid to prevent more booby-trapped packages from being set out.

An Israeli man had his hands blown off Saturday when he picked up a brightly coloured, gift-wrapped box left in a park in a northern Israel town and it exploded.

A similar bomb exploded Friday on a sidewalk in Arab east Jerusalem, slightly injuring five passers-by.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for either bomb, but Israeli police said the devices were made of components used in the past by

Palestinian activists opposed to peace agreements signed with Israel by the PLO.

They said the Jerusalem bomb was apparently destined for the Jewish western sector of the city but was either left in the east because the bombers spotted a police patrol or exploded prematurely.

Both bombs contained several hundred grammes of low-grade explosives, compared to the several kilograms of explosives used by Islamist suicide bombers who have killed scores of Israelis over the past two years, most recently in two multiple attacks in Jerusalem last July and September.

The latest bombings coincided with an eruption of violent protests in the occupied Palestinian territories over the shooting Tuesday by Israeli soldiers of three Palestinian construction workers at an army checkpoint near Hebron.

More than 100 Palestinians have been injured, including a 12-year-old boy who has been declared brain dead, by rubber-coated metal bullets fired by Israeli soldiers during daily protests which erupted since the Tuesday night killings.

Israel acknowledged that the three Palestinians were killed in a "tragic mistake" by soldiers who mistook the workers

for terrorists after the van in which they were riding struck a guard at the checkpoint.

The three soldiers involved in the shooting were briefly detained but then released, further infuriating the Palestinians.

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat on Saturday lashed out at Israel's harsh handling of the protests and called for "international protection against these aggressions."

Anti-Israel groups led by the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), which has carried out the deadliest attacks on Israel, have vowed to avenge the killings.

Israel, Lebanon in trial run for possible troop withdrawal — report

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel and Lebanon recently agreed on, with U.S. mediation, security arrangements for a village in south Lebanon in a deal Israel sees as a trial run for a possible full withdrawal of its forces from the region, the Maariv newspaper reported Sunday.

Under the agreement reached three months ago, forces of the Israeli-armed South Lebanon Army (SLA) withdrew from a village in the Jezzine enclave just north of the buffer zone Israel occupies in south Lebanon,

the newspaper said.

The agreement was designed to ease travel for Lebanese civilians in the Jezzine area, a finger of SLA-controlled land jutting north from the Israeli buffer zone.

Since the pullback from the village of Kfar Fallus, Maariv said, the Lebanese army has prevented Hizbollah guerrillas from using the area to launch attacks on Israeli and SLA forces to the south.

It was the first time that Israel or its SLA allies withdrew from any part of the

south Lebanon buffer area since it was created in its current form following Israel's withdrawal from the much of the rest of Lebanon in 1985.

Maariv quoted senior Israeli sources as "attributing great importance" to the success of the agreement, which they viewed as "a trial run" for a possible Israeli withdrawal from the entire buffer zone.

"The distribution of labour between the SLA and the Lebanese army in the Jezzine area is a good example of possible coexistence between

the two forces," the newspaper quoted the sources as saying.

The Jezzine arrangement was drawn up by Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai and presented to Martin Indyk, U.S. assistant secretary of state for the Near East and a former ambassador to Israel, Maariv said.

Mr. Indyk and U.S. coordinator for the Middle East, Dennis Ross, agreed to take the idea to the Lebanese and the arrangement was worked out by the U.S. mediators, the newspaper said.

Iran nuclear energy chief to visit Russia

TEHRAN (R) — The head of Iran's nuclear energy programme will visit Moscow next month at the invitation of his Russian counterpart, a newspaper said Sunday.

"Iran's Atomic Energy Organisation head Aghazadeh is due to leave here for Moscow next month on an official visit to Russia," the English-language Tehran Times newspaper said, quoting an unnamed "informed source."

Russian firms have been hired to complete an unfinished 1,000-megawatt nuclear power plant at the Iranian Gulf port of Bushehr at a cost of \$850 million.

The United States and Israel have urged Russia not to go ahead with work at Bushehr, fearing Russian assistance could help Iran obtain nuclear weapons.

Iran, which does not have any working nuclear power stations, says it needs such plants in order to produce 20 per cent of its electricity needs.

Two Russian ministers on Wednesday said Russia would press ahead with the Bushehr project despite U.S. opposition. Russian Deputy Prime Minister Vladimir Bulgakov during a visit to Iran this month agreed in principle that Russian firms would help in building a second and third reactor at Bushehr.

A delegation from Mr. Aghazadeh's organisation headed by his deputy, Assadollah Saboori, is already in Russia to hold talks with Russian atomic energy officials, Tehran Times reported.

Iran this month rebuked Ukraine for scrapping a nuclear cooperation deal with Tehran under U.S. pressure. Ukraine backed out of an agreement to provide turbines for the Bushehr plant.



MANNEQUIN AT ARMS EXPO: Emirate Defence Minister Mohammad Ben Rashed Al Maktoum (L) on Sunday listens to Gordon Browlow of American Eagle Simulation talk about the SAM (Simulated Anesthesia Mannequin), used for training in anesthesia and emergency trauma medicine, during the opening of The Triple International Defence Exhibition TRIDEX 98 in Abu Dhabi (See story on page 12) (AFP photo)

Turkish officer rebuffs Yilmaz's attack on forces

ANKARA (R) — A Turkish military officer has strongly denied warnings by Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz that the army was bringing its powerful influence to bear on politics.

"No one in the Turkish armed forces has a coup in mind," Hurriyet newspaper Sunday quoted an unnamed senior officer as saying. "The subject does not even come up in our conversations."

Mr. Yilmaz on Friday accused the secularist generals

of trying to make political gain from a campaign against Islamists and sounded a warning of possible damage to democracy.

"I am warning everyone...the fight against fundamentalism is a joint, state struggle. Nobody should make it a personal vehicle for power," he said. An MP from Mr. Yilmaz's Motherland Party confirmed the military was the target of the remarks.

The comments reported by Hurriyet did not constitute an

official military statement, but senior officers often speak anonymously to the media to express sentiment within Turkey's powerful armed forces.

The officer said Mr. Yilmaz was inventing the threat of military pressure in order to excuse his own political failings.

"Some people are making up fantasy scenarios to hide their own failure," the officer said. "From now on everyone is starting to say things to protect

their own positions."

Mr. Yilmaz took office last year after Necmettin Erbakan resigned as modern Turkey's first Islamist prime minister, forced out by intensive pressure from the military.

Mr. Yilmaz, a secularist conservative, is now under pressure to make good on pledges to curb political Islam.

But he defied the brass earlier this month by backing down in the face of street protests against a ban on Islamic headscarves in education.

Turkey says 27 killed in Kurdish rebel conflict

DIYARBAKIR (R) — Turkey said Sunday its security forces had killed 24 Kurdish rebels for the loss of three soldiers in clashes in the country's southeast.

The emergency rule governor's office in the city of Diyarbakir said in a statement that troops backed by air power had killed 24 Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) guerrillas in Simak province late on Saturday.

Three soldiers were also killed and the operations were continuing, it said.

Heavy fighting has raged in the remote area for at

least three days. The governor's office on Friday announced the deaths of 23 other PKK rebels in earlier fighting.

Domestic newspapers said the security operation was designed to hit the PKK prior to the Kurdish spring festival of Newroz on March 21, often a time for protest by Turkey's Kurdish minority.

More than 27,000 people have been killed in the 13-year conflict between the Turkish security forces and the PKK, fighting for self-rule in the mainly Kurdish southeast.

At least five dead in southern Iran earthquake

TEHRAN (AFP) — A powerful earthquake has struck the southern Iranian province of Kerman, killing at least five people and causing widespread damage to a town and 15 surrounding villages, officials said Sunday.

Around 50 people were also injured in the quake measuring 6.4 on the Richter scale which centred on the town of Golbaf, a carpet-making centre with a population of 12,000, the interior ministry said.

Red Crescent Society officials in Kerman told Agence France Presse of "great material damage" in Golbaf,

100 kilometres southeast of the city of Kerman, and in neighbouring villages.

Communication and power lines have been cut and water pipelines were broken in the quake which hit at 11:12 p.m. Saturday, they said.

Many houses collapsed in poorer areas of the town and a large number of livestock also perished.

The officials said the relief agency had rushed to the scene overnight with drinking water and bread. On Sunday a helicopter was being used to evaluate the extent of the disaster and relief needs.

Suspect to go on trial for attack on British embassy

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A man who allegedly hurled a petrol bomb at the gate of the British embassy in Amman last month has been charged by the State Security Court with "attempts to stage a terrorist act," a judicial source said Sunday.

But no date has been set for the trial of Ziyad Abdul Hafez, 24, suspected of carrying out the foiled attempt on Feb. 11 at the height of popular tension

sparked by Iraq's crisis with the United Nations over weapons inspections.

If convicted by the military court, Mr. Abdul Hafez could face up to five years in jail with hard labour, some lawyers said.

However, the court's verdict can be appealed. "Mr. Abdul Hafez was officially charged with attempting a terrorist act but it does not seem that he is affiliated with any political party or group," said the source, who requested anonymity.

"It seems that he master-

minded the botched plan on his own," he told the Jordan Times. "We expect the trial to start soon."

Security agents arrested the suspect before he threw the homemade bomb at the embassy's gates. It did not explode and nobody was injured.

At the time of the alleged attack, government sources said Mr. Abdul Hafez's botched attack was "an attempt to protest against the British government's pro-U.S. policy and threats to launch a military strike against Iraq."

Badia exhibit opens in London

LONDON (Petra) — An exhibition of photographs depicting life in the Jordanian badia and bedouin heritage was opened Sunday in London under the joint patronage of HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, and the duke of Kent.

Also attending the opening were Jordanian Ambassador to the United Kingdom Fuad Ayoub and Sharif Zein Bint Nasser, director of public relations of the

Jordan Badia Research and Development Programme (JBRDP).

The JBRDP-sponsored exhibition, one of a series of activities to expose British society to life in the Jordanian badia, runs until March 26.

The other activities include a lecture by programme director Mohammad Shabbaz and a review of the research being conducted in the badia regions of Jordan.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

16:10 The World of Peter the Rabbi and Friends
16:30 French Programmes
18:00 Riding High
18:30 Drama — Neighbours
19:00 Le Journal
19:15 Doc. — Cinq Sur Cinq
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Comedy — Hope and Gloria
20:00 Documentary — Perspective
20:30 The American Chart Show
21:10 Drama — Marker
22:00 News in English
22:30 Drama — Law and Order
23:05 Boywatch Nights
23:59 End of T.X.

PRAYER TIMES

04:24 Fajr
05:41 (Sunrise) Dhuha
11:44 Dhuhr
15:09 Asr
17:47 Maghreb
19:04 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 5930740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 4632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590
Terza Sancta Church Tel. 4623366

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology:
The effect of khamis weather conditions will last until Monday evening. It will be warm, dry, and

Anglican Church Tel. 4624853/4624811
St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 865897
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5688404
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 4654952
St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel. 5661757
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 4657440
Greek Orthodox Church Tel. 4623541
Church of Presentation, Sweifeh Tel. 5920146
The Uniate Catholic Church Tel. 4624757
The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190
Evangelical Free Church Tel. 892679
The Baptist Church Tel. 4628052
The Armenian Catholic Church 771331

Min/Max. temp.
Amman 12/24
Aqaba 16/39
Deserts 10/26
Jordan Valley 14/28

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 23, Aqaba 29 Humidity readings: Amman 22 per cent, Aqaba 24 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Issam Asmar 890504
Dr. Nidal As'ad 751572
Dr. Osama Al Hussein 847280
Dr. Abdul Rahim Mustafa 744685
Firas pharmacy 5661912
Ferdows pharmacy 776336
Al Asera pharmacy 4637055

Nabwah pharmacy 4623672
Al Salam pharmacy 4636730
Yacoub pharmacy 4644945
Shamsan pharmacy 4637660
Najm pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Ghazi Ta'ameh 250080
Al Quds pharmacy 1-800-1111
Dr. Randa Shalhin 995170
Khalifeh pharmacy 955417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 4637111
Civ. Defence Department 5661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 4630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192-462111, 4637777
Fire Brigade 4617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Dept. 4630321
Hotel Complaints 5605800
Price Complaints 5661176
Water & Sewerage Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 787111
Telephone Information directory assistance 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 4623101
Abdal Tel. Repairs 5661101
Jordan Television 773111

Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 5680100
J. Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Co. 4636381
RJ Flight Information 44-53200
Queen Alia Int'l Airport 44-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 5921199
The Islamic Abdi 5666131/7
Hussein Medical Centre Tel. 836813, 856836
Luzmila 4630195
Khalidi Maternity 4644281/6
Akileh Maternity 4642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 4642362
Malhas, J. Amman 4636140
Palestine, Shamsani 5607071
Shamsan Hospital 5669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Muasher Hospital 56672279
Al-Ahli, Abdali 09/986732
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 7771013
Al-Bashir 775111/26
Army, Marka 891611/5
Queen Alia Hospital 5602240/50
Amal Hospital 5674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital 09/98323
Zarqa National Hospital 09/900560
Ibn Sina Hospital 09/986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital 021275555
Greek Catholic Hospital 02127275
Ibn Al Nafies Hospital 021247100

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. 44-53200/5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone 44-52700.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:15 Sanaa (RJ)
08:25 Damascus (RJ)
08:35 Jeddah (RJ)
09:15 New Delhi (RJ)
09:50 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:05 Beirut (RJ)
10:20 Cairo (RJ)
16:25 London (RJ)

16:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
18:05 Kuwait (RJ)
18:35 Casablanca, Tunis (RJ)
21:45 Tel Aviv (add) (RJ)
03:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
03:05 Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)

Other Flights

04:15 London (BA)
09:15 Cairo (MS)
12:00 Khartoum (SD)
13:25 Bahrain (GF)
14:30 Doha (QR)
15:05 Vienna (OS)
16:00 Dubai (EK)
18:00 Istanbul (SD)
20:00 Tel Aviv (LY)
21:10 Paris, Damascus (AF)
23:30 Athens (OA)
01:25 Amsterdam (KL)

Royal Wings (RW)

06:05 Tel Aviv (RW)
07:25 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
07:15 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
09:50 Aqaba (RW)
11:10 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
12:00 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
21:20 Aqaba (RW)
22:50 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
06:20 Beirut (RJ)

10:10 Frankfurt, London (RJ)
11:00 Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
12:05 Kuwait (RJ)
12:30 Cairo (RJ)
19:40 Tel Aviv (add) (RJ)
20:15 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
20:40 Damascus (RJ)
20:45 Abu Dhabi (RJ)
21:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
21:15 Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
22:45 Sanaa (RJ)

Other Flights

06:00 Istanbul (TK)
08:25 London (BA)
10:30 Al 'Aish (PF)
10:30 Cairo (MS)
13:20 Istanbul (SD)
14:15 Bahrain (GF)
15:00 Doha (QR)
15:50 Vienna (OS)
17:00 Damascus, Dubai (EK)
19:00 Khartoum (SD)
21:20 Tel Aviv (LY)
23:53 Damascus, Paris (AF)
02:25 Amsterdam (KL)
03:00 Athens (OA)

Royal Wings (RW)

05:30 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
06:50 Tel Aviv (RW)
07:55 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
08:50 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
10:20 Aqaba (RW)
11:40 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
20:30 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
21:50 Aqaba (RW)

Mortars fall on Thailand's Mae La refugee camp

BANGKOK (AFP) — Two mortar shells landed on Mae La camp in northern Thailand's Tak province Sunday, injuring one Karen refugee, Thai military sources said.

Sources based near the camp said the shells hit at about 1 p.m. (0600 GMT), shortly after Thai army chief Gen. Chutha Thanajaro left the area at the end of meetings with local commanders.

Mae La camp houses some 30,000 Karen refugees loyal to Karen National Union (KNU) General Bo Mya, the leader of Myanmar's (Burma's) last ethnic resistance movement. Thai security forces at Mae La were checking all traffic going in and out of the camp Sunday and confirmed that they had heard rumours of a pending attack from Myanmar-based troops.

The KNU Saturday said fighters from the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) and Myanmar government forces had crossed the border and were threatening to attack Mae La, which lies eight kilometres inside Thailand.

Gen. Chutha toured the border area Sunday to assess reports that Myanmar-based troops were poised to launch more raids, army sources said.

Sunday's shelling follows a vicious attack on Karen refugees last week which killed three civilians and left about 9,000 people homeless. Wednesday, 70 to 100 troops crossed the border and attacked nearby Huay Kalok camp, killing three refugees and setting fire to more than 1,000 dwellings.

The Thai military has rejected accusations from aid workers and refugees that it did nothing to stop last week's raid on Huay Kalok, which housed almost 10,000 refugees.

Thailand has since boosted troop numbers along the border but sources in Mae La said refugees still feared for their safety.

The United Nations and other aid organisations have urged the Thai government to ensure the security of refugees living on Thai soil as tensions along the frontier mount.

Last week's attack was condemned by the U.S. government, which accused Myanmar, formerly Burma, of waging a "campaign of terror" against Karen refugees in Thailand.

Myanmar officials have denied any government involvement in the raids.



An ethnic Albanian girl holds up candles, as she makes the victory sign, during a demonstration in the centre of Pristina, the capital of Serbia's province of Kosovo. Tens of thousands of ethnic Albanians participated in a demonstration, calling for peace in the troubled province of Kosovo (Reuters photo)

Pro-independence Taipei mayor leaves on U.S. tour

TAIPEI (AFP) — Pro-independence Taipei mayor Chen Shui-bian left Sunday for the United States on a trip that risks angering Beijing amid improving Sino-U.S. ties.

"There are a lot of individuals and organisations in the United States who are very much concerned about the direction of Taiwan's future," Mr. Chen told reporters before leaving on a Sunday morning flight to Los Angeles.

It's also our responsibility and obligation to spell out our common voices." He is to continue on to Washington, New York and Chicago to address several U.S. think-tanks during an eight-day visit.

Reports had said the veteran Taiwan politician, a potential candidate for the presidency in 2000, was given assurances last month from the U.S. State Department that he would meet with U.S. Vice President Al Gore but a meeting with President Bill Clinton had not been finalised.

Asked whether or not his father would meet Mr. Clinton, the mayor's son said: "There is no such arrangement."

Mr. Chen, who rose to political prominence when he won the first ever direct elections for the Taipei mayor's post, has held meetings here over the past two months with former U.S. Ambassador to China James Lilley, American Institute in Taiwan Chairman and Managing Director Richard Bush and Anthony Lake, former U.S.

national security advisor.

China is adamant that countries with whom it has diplomatic relations do not recognise Taiwan officials in any way, regarding the nationalist island as an integral part of its territory despite the Chinese nationalists setting up a government there after being defeated in a civil war on the mainland in 1949.

Mr. Chen's trip comes amid improving relations between Beijing and Washington, with the announcement Saturday that the U.S. administration would not sponsor an annual U.N. resolution condemning human rights abuses in China.

"Fundamentally, we feel there's been enough progress to warrant an approach that is somewhat different this year," said White House spokesman Eric Rubin, citing China's decision to sign the U.N. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the freeing of several political prisoners including pro-democracy dissident Wei Jingsheng.

The trip also follows a decision by Mr. Clinton to move forward a trip to China to June after Chinese President Jiang Zemin visited Washington for a summit in October last year.

Fellow DPP colleague Chang Chun-hung, a member of parliament, said the Taipei mayor's trip would serve to redefine Taiwan's relationship with China and the United States amid the apparent warming of Sino-U.S. ties.

Mr. Chang said he expected Mr. Chen to "make breakthroughs on some fronts, given his high popularity in the party." He did not elaborate.

But Fu Kun-cheng, a lawmaker with the New Party, dismissed the trip, saying it "is of no great significance."

Mr. Fu said the visit would probably increase Mr. Chen's standing in the DPP but would not affect ties with China or the United States.

Relations across the Taiwan Strait have been warming with recent statements from the Chinese mainland's semi-official Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS) and its Taiwan counterpart, the Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF), to resume talks.

Last Thursday, Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen said that "the time is ripe for the two sides of the Taiwan Straits to engage in political negotiations under the principle of 'one China'."

The statement was a big step forward for both sides following just over two years of worsening ties over Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui's visit to the United States in mid-1995.

Mr. Lee's trip enraged China, affecting its relations with Washington, and sparked six rounds of war games and ballistic missile tests by the Chinese military near Taiwan, interpreted by observers as a strong warning to Taipei not to try to promote the island's independence.

Congressmen in Taiwan to probe alleged political donations

TAIPEI (AFP) — Three U.S. congressmen investigating the illegal donations to the 1996 U.S. election campaign have been trying to speak with Taiwanese politicians and business leaders over their alleged involvement in the scandal, officials said Sunday.

The foreign ministry refused to identify the three U.S. congressmen who arrived here on March 11 for a 10-day trip to conduct "interviews" with several senior government officials and top businessmen.

Officials said, however, the U.S. government had informed Taiwan of the trip and provided authorities with a list of people the congressmen planned to speak with. A U.S. inquiry showed that about \$80,000 had been funnelled to the U.S. Democratic Party for the President Bill Clinton's 1996 presidential reelection bid.

Gonzalez cautious on hopes for Kosovo mission

MADRID (AFP) — The European envoy to Kosovo, Felipe Gonzalez, sounded cautious Sunday on hopes for his mediation mission to the crisis in the Serbian-ruled province, reiterating that Yugoslav President Slobodan's attitude remained "absolutely decisive."

"The attitude of President Slobodan Milosevic is absolutely decisive. If Milosevic says he does not accept a mission in his country, it will not be possible to get a result," Mr. Gonzalez said on his return to Spain from New York.

Mr. Milosevic has so far

declined suggestions of outside mediation in the province whose autonomy was revoked by Belgrade in 1989.

"If the Yugoslav Republic's authorities refuse to receive a representative in their own country, then there is no other means of visiting them against their will," the former Spanish prime minister added.

"Since 1989, I have followed the conflicts in the region closely. If somebody, seeing what has happened since then, is able to make an optimistic statement, I'd be delighted to meet them and congratulate them," he went

on.

Mr. Gonzalez in New York met U.S. envoy for the Balkans Robert Gelbard for talks on the crisis in Kosovo where Serbian police have killed more than 80 ethnic Albanians in a crackdown in two weeks.

The Spaniard was this week

named as envoy of the European Union and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

The ethnic Albanians, who make up 90 per cent of the population of Kosovo, have called for outside mediators to help find a political solution.

Bosnians await ruling on disputed town

BRCKO, Bosnia-Herzegovina (AFP) — An international arbitration commission was set to rule Sunday on the fate of Bosnia's disputed northeast town of Brcko.

However, some diplomats were suggesting that a final ruling — already postponed for a year — could be delayed again. According to the office of the top international envoy to Bosnia, Carlos Westendorp, the commission should have announced its decision Sunday at around 4:00 p.m. (1500 GMT).

Brcko, a river port of some 40,000 inhabitants, is claimed by both of Bosnia's entities — the Serbs' Republika Srpska and the Muslim-Croat Federation.

Cazim Sadikovic, the Muslim negotiator within the commission, said Saturday that the town would probably be placed under the jurisdiction of the Bosnian federal authorities, while maintaining an international presence.

The commission had been expected to rule last year on the fate of Brcko, but postponed the decision and placed the town under international supervision.

The commission was set up under the 1995 Dayton peace accords after neither side could agree which entity should have Brcko, which was captured by the Bosnian Serbs in 1992.

For the Serbs, it is a vital link between both halves of their territory, while the Croats and Muslims, who formed the majority before the war, say that to award it to the Serbs would be rewarding "ethnic cleansing."

Body of former Irish minister found in the sea

CORK, Ireland (AFP) — The body of Irish MP and former government minister Hugh Coveney was recovered in the sea off the south coast Sunday after a major rescue alert when he went missing while out walking his dogs, the Irish navy confirmed.

Coveney, 62, who was MP for Cork South-Central, had gone walking with his three dogs along the cliffs at Robbers Cove, near his Minane Bridge home in Cork Saturday, but failed to

return. An extensive search involving the Irish Navy, lifeboats, helicopters and other emergency services located his car and two of his three dogs.

The third dog was then discovered about 50 feet down a dangerous cliff-face.

Just before midday, naval divers recovered his body from the sea within yards of where the third dog had been found. It is believed he may have plunged to his death while trying to help his dog.

A member of the centrist Fine Gael party, now in the opposition, he was minister for defence and marine from 1994 to 1995 and junior minister in the finance department from 1995 to 1997.

Prime minister Bertie Ahern led tributes to Coveney and said he was "deeply shocked" by his death.

Fine Gael party leader and former prime minister John Bruton described his death as "an unmitigated tragedy." He

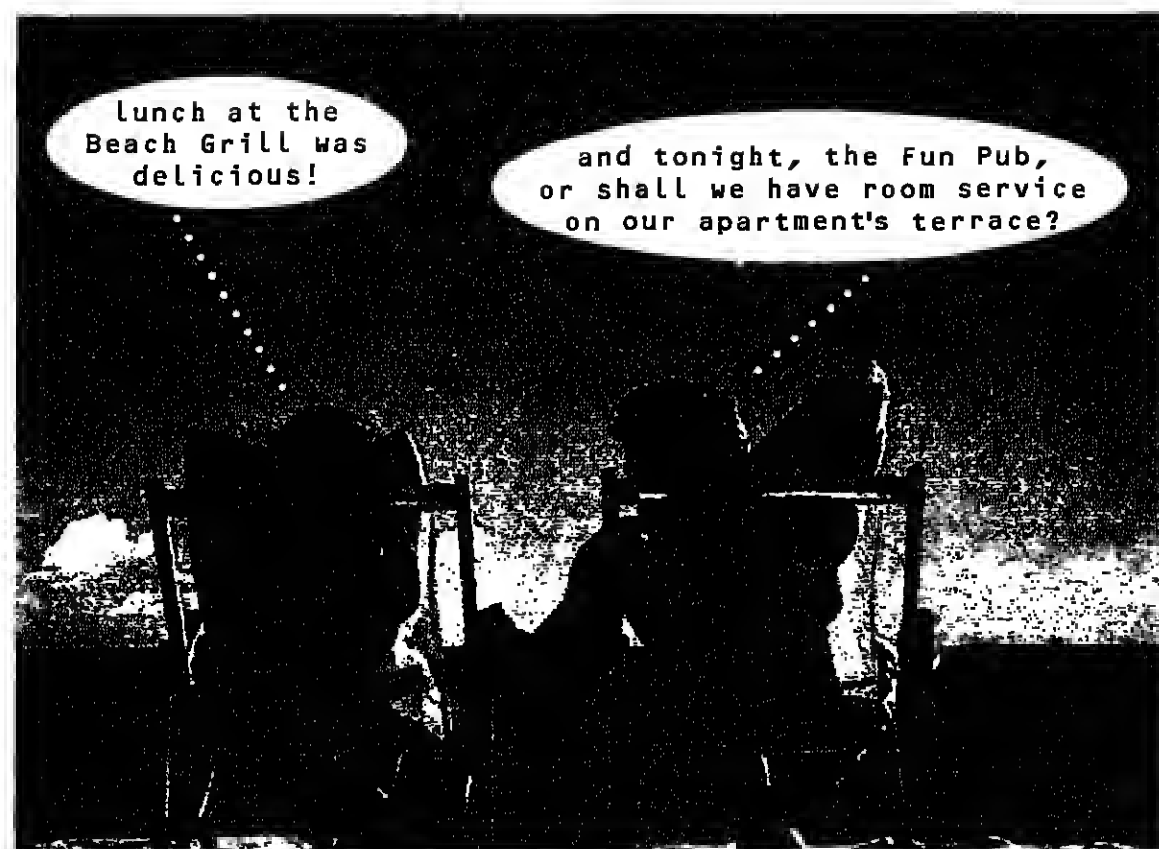
described him as a distinguished politician and a person of "great kindness."

A chartered surveyor with extensive business interests, Coveney was one of the wealthiest members of the Irish parliament.

A former lord mayor of Cork, he first became an MP in 1981.

He was also a member of the ministerial team involved in the Northern Ireland peace process in 1996-97.

He was the father of seven children.



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A Zara Project

Ugandan army kills 30 children in mistaken rebel ambush

KAMPALA (AFP) — The Ugandan army has killed 30 children in an ambush in northern Uganda's Kitgum district after mistaking them for rebels, the weekly Rupiny newspaper reported Sunday.

The paper said the children, who reportedly died on March 1, were among 60 people recently abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels in Kitgum's Agago county.

A handful of rebels had taken a large group of the captives to fetch water from a swamp, when government forces lying in ambush for the rebels opened fire, killing more than 30 children.

Residents of the area only discovered days later what had happened when they came across the rotting bodies, some of which still had ropes on their wrists with which they had been earlier bound by the rebel group, operating under the command of the self-styled Brigadier Lakani.

Survivors of the ambush

were either admitted at a hospital or taken to the northern Ugandan regional army headquarters in Gulu, the paper said.

Rupiny said that the 1,000-strong force, including fresh abductees, later crossed the border back to their bases in government-held territory in southern Sudan.

Military officials were confirmed to AFP Sunday that the ambush had indeed taken place, but declined to give further details or comment.

In 1995, LRA rebels marching hundreds of kidnapped children back to their bases across the border into Sudan were attacked by a Ugandan military helicopter gunship, killing scores of the children.

The LRA has been fighting the Ugandan government for a decade in an attempt to overthrow it and put in its place a system of rule based on the biblical 10 commandments.

The rebels' main method of recruitment is by abduction, through which up to

10,000 children are believed to have been kidnapped and turned into either soldiers or sex slaves since 1994.

At least 3,000 of the captives have escaped and reported that over 80 per cent of the LRA rebel force is made up of abductees aged under 18 years.

Uganda accuses Sudan of backing the LRA and several other rebels fighting to destabilise the Kampala regime, while Sudan counter-accuses Uganda of supporting John Garang's rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) battling Khartoum since 1983 to end domination of the mainly Christian and animist south by the Arabised, Islamic north.

Inhabitants of northern Uganda are overwhelmingly in favour of a negotiated end to the devastating war, arguing that it is their children who are dying in the fighting, but Yoweri Museveni has repeatedly said he was committed to a military end to the conflict.

French left set to strengthen power base in regional elections

PARIS (R) — The French voted Sunday in regional elections which, though failing to catch the public imagination, could have major political repercussions.

Some commentators predicted abstentions could approach 40 per cent, an unusually high rate in a country which traditionally takes its politics seriously.

Most opinion polls indicated the left was headed for a big victory, strengthening the hand of Socialist Prime Minister Lionel Jospin, his party's likely candidate at the 2002 presidential election.

A left-wing victory Sunday would deal a second heavy blow to the opposition centre-right following its upset defeat in parliamentary elections last June at the hands of the now-ruling coalition of Socialists, Communists and Greens.

The left has portrayed the regional vote as a referendum on Mr. Jospin's rule while the opposition insists it reflects only local concerns.

Following a 1992 sweep in the last regional polls, the centre-right now controls all but two of the 22 regions in mainland France plus Corsica. It also holds two of the four overseas regions.

Analysts were predicting the lion's share of regions could end up in the left's hands after Sunday's vote.

French regional councils have limited authority. They oversee regional planning and hand out and administer state subsidies in education, transport, housing, training and environmental protection. But they provide national politicians with crucial local power bases that are particularly important for the parliamentary opposition.

A big victory for the left would be widely viewed as a strong endorsement of Mr. Jospin's moves towards European Monetary Union, imposing a 35-hour working week and relying on a strong state role in combating France's near-record 12.1 per cent unemployment.

The centre-left daily Liberation, in an editorial published Saturday, said the opposition was upset that the Socialist premier had given it so little ammunition for a campaign.

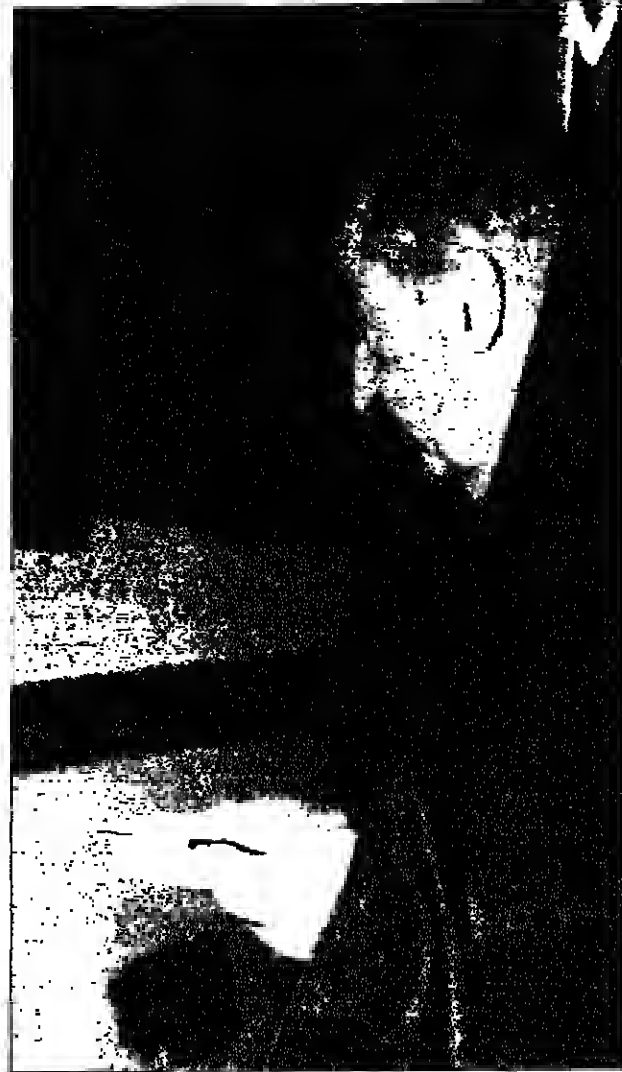
Mr. Jospin was offering France's more than 38 million voters a winning "secret cocktail" advocating French participation in a more unified Europe while avoiding laissez-faire capitalism, it said.

The right-wing Le Figaro, on the other hand, fretted that "the abstention party could win the biggest victory Sunday", complaining that the campaign was ignoring the key issues and stirring little excitement despite the stakes. It urged voters to turn out and surprise the pundits.

In the 1992 regional elections, 31 per cent of those eligible did not cast votes. A high abstention rate would hurt the centre-right most as surveys have found conservative voters the least interested in participating.

Six years ago the combined mainstream centre-right won 33 per cent of the vote to 14 per cent for the far-right National Front, 26.3 per cent for the combined left and 6.8 per cent for the Greens. This year, the Greens are for the most part running on slates of combined left.

In Sunday's vote, more than 15,000 candidates are contesting a total of 1,880 regional council seats.



Former Prime Minister and right-wing candidate for the Ile-de-France region Edouard Balladur leaves the polling booth after voting in the French regional election. Most opinion polls indicate the left is headed for a big victory, strengthening the hand of Socialist Prime Minister Lionel Jospin (Reuters photo)

NATO chief says cooperation will win Russia over

MOSCOW (R) — NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana believes increased cooperation between the alliance and Russia has already injected a new atmosphere of trust into troubled ties, Interfax news agency said Sunday.

It quoted Mr. Solana as saying in an interview with the weekly magazine Interfax-Aif that the next meeting of the NATO-Russia joint permanent council on March 25 was likely to agree on the details of some 50 military cooperation projects for the year.

The council set up under last May's founding act between Russia and NATO and increasing ties between military officers "has swiftly created a new atmosphere of cooperation and trust", Interfax quoted Mr. Solana as saying.

It said Mr. Solana was deeply convinced the gains from this cooperation would be so great Russia would want to maintain and build on the relationship with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

The full text of the interview was expected to be published in the next edition of the weekly, due out Monday.

Mr. Solana's upbeat comments contrasted markedly with recent remarks from Russian leaders, who remain particularly critical of NATO enlargement plans.

Earlier this month, for example, First Deputy Prime Minister Boris Nemtsov said during a visit to Germany that enlarging NATO to take in former Soviet republics could destabilise Russia political-

ly. He said Russia grudgingly accepted NATO's planned admission of former Warsaw pact states Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic next year to join 16 existing member countries.

But the possibility the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania — Soviet republics until independence in 1991 — might also be admitted was quite a different matter.

It was not clear from the Interfax excerpts whether Mr. Solana had been asked in the interview about NATO enlargement plans.

It quoted him as saying he would visit Russia this year. "Last summer I even spent my holiday there with my family because I wanted to show them your wonderful country," he said.

Russia launches supply tug for Mir space station

MOSCOW (R) — Russia blasted a cargo tug into orbit Sunday to take supplies up to the Mir space complex including a jet engine to help turn the station and wrenches to replace a set broken by the crew, a duty officer said.

He said from mission control outside Moscow that a Soyuz-U rocket lifted off from Baikonur Space Centre in Kazakhstan with the Progress M-35 cargo craft at 1:46 a.m. (12:46 GMT Saturday).

"Everything went without a hitch," he said by telephone.

The Progress tug is packed with several tonnes of supplies, including water, fuel, technical equipment, clothing, food and letters for the three-man crew aboard Mir.

Space experts on earth have also sent aloft a special jet engine which Mir Commander Talgat Musabayev and Engineer Nikolai Budarin will fix to the end of a boom during a space walk. The small device will help orientate the ageing station.

Musabayev and Budarin, in orbit with NASA astronaut Andrew Thomas, will also receive a new set of wrenches to replace the set they broke trying to open a hatch to go on a space walk earlier this month. There is also a new lock for the hatch.

Later Sunday, the previous Progress tug was to be backed away from Mir to free up a docking port for the new craft.

Japanese prosecutor eyes talks with Airbus on Nagoya crash

TOKYO (AFP) — A Japanese prosecutor left for France Sunday to try to question Airbus Industrie on a 1994 plane crash in Nagoya that claimed more than 200 lives, officials said.

The investigator and another official from the Nagoya prosecutors office left the central Japanese city for working-level talks with French authorities to pave the way for the questioning of Airbus, government officials said.

The two will stay in France for about a week to see if they can gain access to the company, Japan Broadcasting Corp. (NHK) said.

They believe an inquiry into Airbus officials is indispensable in determining whether the European consortium bears criminal responsibility for the Nagoya crash, the national television network said.

In April 1994, a China Airlines Airbus A300-600R passenger jet plunged to the ground at Nagoya airport after a flight from Taipei, killing 264 people out of 271 on board.

Japanese authorities issued a final report into the crash in July 1996, blaming both human error and design faults in the aircraft and calling for improved pilot training at China Airlines.

It said the plane's co-pilot mistakenly called off the landing, sending the aircraft climbing on automatic pilot.

When the crew tried to

reverse the upward movement, failing to notice that auto-pilot was switched on, the plane's computer system countered the action.

As a result of the contradictory orders, the jet lost speed and plunged tail first to the ground, the report said.

It also called on Airbus to improve aircraft design, including a change in the command to "switch to auto-pilot."

In September 1996, Japanese police posthumously charged the pilot and co-pilot with navigational errors, but found Airbus Industrie had little direct responsibility for the disaster.

Documents given to prosecutors said four China Airlines officials were accused of neglecting to properly train pilots on the automatic navigation system, despite an Airbus manual warning of the risks of not doing so.

Airbus blamed pilot error for the Nagoya crash, but was accused of failing to cooperate with the police inquiry.

The Feb. 16 Taiwan air disaster has chilling echoes of the Nagoya crash — both had the same Airbus model, both aborted their first landing and both were China Airlines.

The two crashes, each claiming more than 200 lives, took place in adequate visibility and left investigators scrambling for clues in the immediate aftermath.

Clashes shake anti-Taleban alliance city

KABUL (AFP) — Heavy clashes between two factions in Afghanistan's anti-Taleban alliance have rocked the northern stronghold of Mazar-i-Sharif for the second day running, sources told AFP Sunday.

Independent sources in contact with the city said the situation was "highly tense" as forces loyal to ethnic-Uzbek warlord Abdul Rashid Dostam bailed the powerful Shiite Muslim Hezb-i-Wahdat faction.

"Heavy fighting has taken place right inside the centre of town and the situation can only be described as confusing and chaotic," the source said.

Western sources contacted inside the city added that during a morning lull in the fighting, a number of civilians attempted to leave to escape the clashes.

"Today (Sunday) has been a little bit calmer and many civilians have taken the opportunity to leave the city which is still extremely tense," the source reported.

No further details on the clashes or information on casualties caused by the fighting — which has involved light and heavy machine gun fire, rocket propelled grenades and mortar fire — were immediately available.

The Pakistan-based private news service Afghan

Islamic Press said Saturday the clashes left dozens of people dead.

Mr. Dostam officials contacted by satellite telephone refused to confirm or deny any outbreak of fighting.

Mazar-i-Sharif is Afghanistan's largest city outside of Taleban control, and is the headquarters of the so-called anti-Taleban alliance, a coalition of northern factions opposed to the hardline Muslim militia.

The Shiite faction Hezb-i-Wahdat rose to dominate the city late last year when it led a massive defence of Mazar-i-Sharif from a major Taleban assault in September.

Since then Mr. Dostam, who once formed the dominant power in the city, has been attempting to regain control.

The coalition includes ex-Communist Dostam, Hezb-i-Wahdat, the ousted Kabul government loyal to ex-President Burhanuddin Rabbani and commander Ahmad Shah Masood and at least five other splinter groups.

Although united in their opposition to the hardline Muslim Taleban who hold two-thirds of the country, all alliance factions have at one time in the past fought each other and remain prone to occasional bouts of fighting.

Sierra Leone security starts probe into ex-junta aides

FREETOWN (AFP) — Security officials in Sierra Leone have begun an enquiry into the roles of top aides of the ousted military junta, to assess their involvement with an "illegal regime", official sources said Sunday.

The state-owned Daily Mail paper reported that those being questioned were former Deputy Director of Prisons Moses Showers, Assistant Police Commissioner Valisius Bangura, Minister in Victor Brandon, opposition MP Victor Foh, and three unnamed others.

Attorney-General Solomon Berewa has declared that investigations of suspected collaborators with the junta, which was ousted from Freetown by Nigerian-led troops on Feb. 12, will be speedy but very thorough.

The Daily Mail said investigating officers would look into "the level of the men's involvement in the illegal regime", which seized power in May last year and was ousted by Nigerian ECO-MOG troops acting in the name of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

AS).

The paper added that three Lebanese merchants, Toufic Huballah, Faiz Antar and Elias Zacharia and a chief imam (Muslim prayer leader), Alhaji Ibrahim Sesay, had been arrested for possible alleged collaboration with the junta of Lieutenant-Colonel Johnny Paul Koroma.

More than 1,300 people are currently being held in connection with the enquiries in maximum security prisons in Freetown, to which elected President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah made a triumphant return last week.

Officials have said some of those detained are being held for their own safety, given the unpopularity of the junta which had been backed by many rebels of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), who fought a succession of regimes from 1991.

Pockets of anti-Kabbah resistance are still holding out in parts of the West African country, which has considerable mineral wealth and was once a tourist haven before civil war and an anarchic struggle for resources plunged it into chaos.

S. African ministers to visit Mozambique over arrest of official

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — Two ministers are to visit Mozambique for urgent talks on the arrest on gun-running charges of a senior South African foreign affairs official, reports said Sunday.

The Sunday Independent said Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi and Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad would hold talks in Maputo Tuesday with senior Mozambican interior ministry officials on the arrest Monday of Robert McBride, director of the foreign affairs Asia desk.

Mr. McBride was held at the Mozambican border town of Ressano Garcia after trying to flee when an accomplice he allegedly sent to buy machine-guns from a known arms dealer in Maputo was arrested along with the dealer.

Mr. McBride's wife, Paula, visited the former anti-apartheid guerrilla in his Mozambican prison late Saturday and said afterwards he was in good spirit.

She told reporters her husband had gone to Mozambique of his own accord to investigate gun-running to South Africa's Zulu nationalist Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP).

His investigation was in preparation for a Southern African Development Community meeting on cross-border crime to be held in Mozambique on March 23, she said.

Paula McBride said her husband had made an error in conducting an investigation on his own but had done so because he felt he would get the cooperation of people who were not prepared to speak to police.

Her husband, she added, had apologised for bringing South Africa into dispute and for the problems his arrest had caused the Pretoria government, which has denied Mr. McBride was on official business when he was arrested.

Afrikaans-language Rapport newspaper, mean-

while, quoted a senior South African policeman Sunday as saying Mozambican police had sufficient evidence against Mr. McBride to put him behind bars "for a very long time."

Assistant Police Commissioner Sukker Britz, who was sent to Mozambique last week to assist in the investigation, told the newspaper there was little doubt in his mind that Mr. McBride is an arms-smuggler.

Mr. McBride is known in South Africa as the "Mago's Bar bomber" after he planted a bomb in a pub bearing that name in the eastern city of Durban in 1986, which killed three people.

He was sentenced to death but later received political amnesty as part of a deal struck between the African National Congress and the former apartheid government during constitutional negotiations that eventually led to democratic elections in 1994.

2 Japanese held hostage in tourism dispute in Bolivia

LA PAZ (AFP) — Two Japanese tourists were held hostage for seven hours by indigenous Bolivians protesting the encroachment of a tourist centre on an ancient sacrificial site, local television said Saturday.

The tourists were seized Thursday in a bid by the indigenous Bolivians to protect a site on the Island of the Sun in Lake Titicaca, the highest navigable lake in the

world. Virgin girls and boys were sacrificed to the sun god on the island in the 10th and 11th centuries near the place where a tourist company set up a resort centre and a small museum.

After negotiations with authorities, the rebels released the tourists, whose names were not given, along with employees of the company that owns the resort centre.

The hostages were seized when the protesters took over the site after overpowering resort security guards.

A unit of the Bolivian navy stationed nearby was deployed to put down the riot, but the protesters countered by throwing sticks of dynamite — used in Andean mining and easily found in the area — injuring five sailors, the television report said.

Latvia SS men to stage controversial reunion

RIGA (R) — About 500 former Latvian SS soldiers who fought for the Nazis during World War II gathered in Riga Sunday for a controversial commemoration of the unit's 55th anniversary.

The gathering is part of two days of events marking the German formation of the Latvian legion, including a church service and a procession through Riga's old town Monday.

The events have been blasted by groups who see the commemoration as an affront to those who suffered Nazi atrocities.

Historians and Nazi hunters say membership in the legion did not necessarily amount to war

crimes guilt, but some units that were added to it near the end of the war had committed atrocities.

"They were fighting in an organisation... whose goal was for the third Reich to win the war," said Ephraim Zurath, director of the Jerusalem office of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre.

"Many of them were members of security organisations who took part in the murder of Jews prior to joining the Latvian legion," Mr. Zurath told Reuters.

Over 100,000 Latvians were drafted by the Nazis or joined the Latvian legion during the German occupation of the small Baltic state.

Latvia's government has said it will not participate in the events. Local Russian-language organisations have bitterly attacked the events, calling on President Guntis Ulmanis to have the Monday march banned.

Critics say Latvia, which quit the former Soviet Union in 1991, should find heroes who have not been tainted by either the Soviet or Nazi regime.

But the former members of the legion tell a different story. They say their fight on the Russian front was a service to their homeland after tens of thousands of Latvians and other Balts were shipped to Siberia in the early

days of the Soviet regime. "We wanted to defend our fatherland... not to allow Russian imperialism to return," said Valdis Lasis, a 74-year-old former platoon commander in the Latvian legion.

"I was not a fascist. I just did not want Communism to return to Latvia," said Mr. Lasis.

The veterans say they were conscripted illegally and that the Germans lied when they called the legion a voluntary SS unit to get around the Geneva and Hague conventions.

After the Nazi defeat the allies confirmed these claims and the U.S. said membership in the Latvian legion was not an

obstacle to immigration for the thousands of refugees in displaced persons' camps throughout Europe.

Historians and Nazi hunters say this confused the legion's status since it effectively annexed members of security squads that had killed Jews and were brought into the legion in its final days.

"From my perspective it looks like a tragic situation," said Andrew Ezergailis, a professor of history at U.S. Itasca College, who has researched the legion.

"They don't want to recognise it as having participated in an ironic turn of events."



PRINCESS SARVATH VISITS UJ: Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath Sunday receives a briefing at the University of Jordan's Centre for Phonetics and Research by the centre's officials on the services accorded to the local community and university's students. The centre was established in 1982 (Petra photo)

Charitable society receives proceeds from music festival

AMMAN (J.T.) — One of four charitable societies under the patronage of HRH Princess Sarvath received a cheque Sunday representing part of the proceeds from the Orbit Argh Music and Song Festival, which was held in Amman at the end of January.

Sawsan Majali, president of the Malaath (Hospice) Foundation, received the cheque at a special ceremony, where it was announced that the other three societies, the Young Women's Muslim Association, the National Blood Bank, and the Jordan National Red Crescent Society, will receive cheques at similar ceremonies.

The three-day festival was organised by the Orbit Satellite Television and Radio Network in conjunction with Jordan Television and featured popular singers and television stars such as Warda Al Jazairiah, Ragheb Alameh, and George Wasuf.

Upon receiving the donation, Dr. Majali announced that the Malaath Foundation plans to purchase cars to facilitate house calls by medical personnel to patients with chronic diseases.

She told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that most of the patients under the society's care are cancer patients

who are treated at home, with the assistance of family members.

The Malaath Foundation is a non-profit organisation that works in collaboration with medical and nursing staff to facilitate the provision of palliative and hospice care for terminally ill patients.

The foundation was established in 1993 with initial funding from the United States Agency for International Development.

Dr. Majali voiced appreciation of Princess Sarvath, honorary president of Malaath, for her relentless efforts in support of the foundation's activities.

PPD files lawsuit against correspondent of foreign paper

By Alia Shukri Hamzeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Press and Publication Department (PPD) has filed a lawsuit against the correspondent of the London-based Al Quds Al Arabi newspaper.

"This lawsuit filed by the PPD is the first of its kind in Jordan against a correspondent of a foreign publication," said Bassam Badarine, the Amman bureau chief and correspondent of Al Quds Al Arabi.

According to Mr. Badarine, the charge sheet in the case filed against him by PPD Director General Bilal Tal includes "distorting the image of Jordan abroad, harming ties between Jordan and friendly countries, and harming the Kingdom's dignity."

The charges are based on 12 articles published in six separate editions of the newspaper several months ago, he said.

Mr. Badarine denied the charges. "The reports or articles written were not intended

to harm [Jordan] at all," he said.

He added that the articles focused mainly on the relationship between the government and the Islamist-led opposition during and after the November elections, and included news analysis on the Middle East peace process and the opposition's stance towards it.

None of the issues in which the 12 articles appeared reached Jordanian readers, he said.

"All six issues in which the 12 articles appeared were confiscated by the PPD," he said.

The PPD started a strict enforcement of the May temporary press law which was widely criticised both at home and abroad as stifling freedom of expression.

The revisions introduced tough curbs on reporting, imposed stiffer fines on offenders and introduced crushing financial obligations, especially on weekly papers, 13 of which were forced to close down.

The temporary press law was annulled in January by the High Court of Justice after ruling that it was "unconstitutional."

Mr. Badarine told the Jordan Times that he was summoned by the attorney general for interrogation, but was released the same day pending further investigation and referral to the court.

"I am facing more than one charge," he said adding that the charges are "serious, since they fall under the penal code and not the press law."

The press law stipulates fines ranging from JD1,000-JD6,000, while the penal code includes jail sentences for violators.

"I would be facing a minimum of a year and a half in prison for each charge," he said.

Asked to comment on the case, Mr. Tal said he believed Mr. Badarine has violated the law and should be taken to court. He did not wish to elaborate.

Amman municipality plans new tunnel

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Amman Municipality has begun drawing up final designs and preparing tenders for another traffic tunnel that will cost an estimated JD500,000.

A municipality source was quoted Sunday by the Arabic daily Al Ra'i as saying that the four-lane tunnel will be an extension to the main road that passes through the Wadi Haddadeh and Nuzha districts and extends to the Wadi Tal forest on the Amman-Jerash road.

According to the source, the

tunnel will ease congestion in these districts, especially traffic heading toward the city centre from the north, and on University Road.

The municipality has built a number of pedestrian and vehicles tunnels in several parts of Amman. The most recent project, a 200-metre tunnel linking Wadi Haddadeh with the city centre, was inaugurated by Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor last November.

The Wadi Haddadeh tunnel, which is 2.4 metres wide, was

designed by a company from New Zealand, while the construction was carried out by an Italian company in conjunction with and under the supervision of Amman Municipality authorities.

Last June, the municipality inaugurated two tunnels at the Third Circle in Jabal Amman, which were constructed over a period of 135 days at a cost of JD1.5 million.

The municipality source did not give a time period for the construction of the new tunnel.

Project to link Red, Dead seas with canal awaiting \$10 million for feasibility study

By Francesca Ciriaci
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — After receiving long-awaited Israeli support, the Red Sea-Dead Sea Canal (RSDSC) project is currently awaiting \$10 million in funding for a comprehensive feasibility study, Minister of Water Munther Haddadin said Sunday.

Jordan has long been pushing for the construction of a canal to connect the Red Sea to the Dead Sea for the vital purpose of water desalination, as well as generating modest amounts of electricity.

Benefiting from the 410-metre difference in altitude between the two seas, Red Sea water will reach the Dead Sea by gravity flow, Mr. Haddadin told the Jordan Times.

However, "it would still be necessary to pump up the water from the Red Sea, and such an operation would further increase the pressure already generated by the difference in altitude between the two seas."

"Such pressure would be enough to desalinate the water of the RSDSC through hydro-osmosis, while residual pressure would be used to gener-

ate electricity," the minister explained.

The amount of electricity generated, however, "would be barely sufficient to pump the fresh water to the urban centres," he said.

Israel, which had long opposed the RSDSC project, capitulated during HRH Crown Prince Hassan's visit to Tel Aviv last week.

A joint communiqué issued on March 10 by Prince Hassan and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced that "the two sides expressed their support for pursuing the idea of the RSDSC, subject to the positive analysis of the international financial institutions as to the economic feasibility of the project."

"The idea originated here back in 1976, gathered a bit of momentum and was briefly studied in 1979-1980. It was also the subject of our negotiations with Israel during the peace talks, as a major component of the Jordan Rift Valley Development (JRVD) project," recalled Mr. Haddadin, who was also a member in the Jordanian delegation to the peace talks.

"But, while the JRVD was

included as a separate article in the [1994] peace treaty — Art. 20, on "Rift Valley Development" — somehow the idea of connecting the Red and Dead seas was always seen with lack of enthusiasm on the part of the Israelis," Mr. Haddadin noted.

Israel was advocating its own idea of connecting the Dead Sea with the Mediterranean.

"But when the two schemes are compared, the benefit-cost ratio is much higher in the RSDSC project," he noted, adding that "the benefits [of the RSDSC] go beyond those of just a canal connecting the two seas, and would include other economic gains, by creating a retention pond for desert rain, and developing new communities in an otherwise almost uninhabited territory."

Most importantly, the minister said, the cost of the RSDSC project would be much lower than the cost of a canal linking the Mediterranean and the Dead seas.

As for the environmental impact of the project, Mr. Haddadin maintained that "speculation will be proved or disproved by the feasibility

study."

A \$3 million pre-feasibility study on the RSDSC was recently conducted by a consortium of U.S., Italian, and British consultants.

According to official figures, Jordan's renewable water resources are 750 million cubic metres (MCM) a year — well below the annual consumption of one billion cubic metres.

The ministry of water also estimated that the Kingdom's water deficit for all uses will grow from about 222 MCM in 1995 to 251 MCM by the year 2011.

Earlier this month, Jordan secured \$630 million in grants and loans for water projects to be implemented in the next five years within the framework of an overall 14-year Water Sector Investment Programme.

Additional water supplies were central to the peace treaty with Israel, according to which the Jewish state was to provide 200 MCM of water annually to Jordan, mostly from the Yarmouk River, and 50 MCM from additional sources.

While the first amount awaits the construction of new

dams on the Yarmouk, the latter was the subject of a tense dispute last year following Israel's failure to honour its obligations.

A round of bilateral discussions were crowned by a summit between His Majesty King Hussein and Mr. Netanyahu in Aqaba last May, during which "it was agreed that Israel would supply Jordan with half that amount for the time being, until a desalination plant was set up," said Mr. Haddadin.

"Since then, we have been receiving the 25 MCM regularly and without interruption. We are now discussing with the Israelis the set-up of that desalination plant, and we have formed a core group that can look into the feasibility of the project, and then jointly we will look for financing to realise it. When that happens, we will be receiving the 50 MCM agreed upon," Mr. Haddadin stated.

He added that, though no site has yet been decided for the desalination plant, "logically it should be on Israeli soil, because the springs are on Israeli soil."

However, we are open to all suggestions.

Absolute poverty has risen to 26% — Mamser

By Amy Henderson
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Aqaba Port authorities Sunday said a quantity of fuel that spilled into the Gulf of Aqaba last Friday has been contained and will be entirely cleared away by the end of this week.

Mohammad Dalabeeh, head of the port authority, said a Jordanian-owned cargo ship carrying livestock released roughly three tonnes of fuel into the gulf as a result of "human error" in the handling of valves on the ship. The ship was sailing under the flag of the Bahamas and entered the port to unload 4,500 head of Australian sheep.

The captain said the majority of the fuel was "light" fuel, which is easy to collect, and

Aqaba oil spill 'contained' — official

By Amy Henderson
Special to the Jordan Times

because the amount of "heavy" fuel spilled was minimal, the spillage was easily contained.

"The Prince Hamzeh Pollution Control Centre put the booms around the spill and it was contained almost immediately," Capt. Dalabeeh said. "We cleaned most of the spill the same day and by the end of this week, nothing will remain on the beaches."

"We don't consider this a major spill," he said. "It was a result of a technical mistake in opening and closing valves as opposed to more serious cases where ships hit jetties and the flow of oil is difficult to stop."

A local daily Sunday reported that an Aqaba court was expected to fine the ship's agent.

Pollution and oil spills are a

constant threat to the coral reefs at Aqaba, but environmental experts in the port city said the spill has not caused noticeable damage. However, they said, the full impact can be estimated only after a week or two.

In a spill, oil blocks the coral reef "tubes" — which essentially act as the lungs of the reefs — and eventually suffocates it. According to a source at the Royal Diving Society in Aqaba, a reef, growing at approximately two centimetres per year, takes between 40 and 50 years to reach full size.

But, the source added that none of the oil spilled reached the corals.

"The port is quite a distance from the corals," he explained. "The spill was small and it seems that it has

been dealt with very well. The danger we face is when it is windy and the wind blows the waves — it goes straight to the corals."

An official at the Marine Science Station said the greatest environmental damage would be to animals living in the intertidal zone.

"A spill goes to the shore and affects animals there," said Marouf Khalaf, deputy director of the station. "So far, we have seen no evidence of dead or sick animals. But, we can say that we will see some, however, minor. It may be another week before we know how much."

The most devastating spill in Aqaba occurred three years ago, when a cargo ship released 55 tonnes of oil into the gulf.

Parliamentary delegation inspects prison conditions 21 detainees from Ma'an disturbances released

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A four-member parliamentary delegation Sunday visited Salt prison and met with 40 "political prisoners" jailed on several charges, a member of the team said.

The head of the Public Freedoms Committee in the Lower House, Mohammad Azaideh, said the team inspected the living conditions of the inmates and the jail.

Mr. Azaideh told the Jordan Times that most of the prisoners were "affiliated with Islamic groups involved in

'political activities' and were sentenced to several terms in jail."

In general, the jail's condition is good but there are some problems that should be addressed, such as the size of the cells, which are "little bit small," the deputy said.

He added that the inmates have asked that regular visits by their families be allowed and sent requests to the government for general amnesty.

Mr. Azaideh said some of the inmates were affiliated with the "Arab Afghan," which fought against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, and were

involved in masterminding attacks on public places in the Kingdom.

The deputy said the team was not able to visit the detainees in Baireen jail in Zarqa, who were allegedly involved in the February riots in Ma'an, "for lack of time."

Meanwhile, 21 detainees who were charged with taking part in the two-day riots which rocked Ma'an were released Sunday upon orders from His Majesty King Hussein, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said.

During the disturbances, the government ordered the army to deploy in Ma'an and a six-

day curfew was imposed on the city, home to more than 30,000 inhabitants.

The army launched a house-to-house search for suspects involved in the unrest, which led to the death of one person and the injury of 23 others.

The agency said "those who were charged with 'slight offences' were set free." It did name these offences.

The agency said the prosecutor general of the State Security Court, where the detainees were scheduled to be tried, sent a memo ordering their release in return for a "written guarantee" from them.

Arab music academy elects Fakhouri as secretary general

By Jean-Claude Elias
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Arab Academy of Music (AAM) concluded its 15th annual meeting last week in Amman with the election of Kifah Fakhouri, head of the National Music Conservatory/Noor Al Hussein Foundation, as AAM secretary general.

Dr. Fakhouri succeeds the late professor and celebrated Iraqi musician Munir Bashir.

In addition to the routine items on its agenda and the election of a secretary general, the main subject of the AAM's meeting this year was "Arabic Music in the Context of Modern Technology."

Dr. Fakhouri told the Jordan Times that discussions on the topic covered four basic aspects: composition and education, research, education and culture, and information.

While some of the participants blamed technology for altering the original



Kifah Fakhouri (Photo by Jean-Claude Elias)

spirit of Arabic music, there was a general consensus about the clear benefits that technology can bring to Arabic music.

Munzer Jamil Hafez and Basim Hanna Boutros from Iraq, Tawfiq Al Basha and Elie Kesrouani from Lebanon, Mohammad Ahmad Jamal from Bahrain and Al Abdallah from Jordan presented

papers on different aspects of the relationship between technology and Arabic music.

All participants agreed that computer music software and equipment for recording, scoring and teaching music are positive facets of the new techniques. Digital techniques in particular were regarded as essential to

any type of music. Also, experimentation with synthesizers and electronic keyboards is welcome, although these instruments are more suitable for Western music.

The AAM insisted on keeping a clear distinction between "acceptable experiments" and "original, genuine Arabic music heritage." At the same time, it was generally admitted that the fear of technology was chiefly due to partial or complete ignorance of it.

The participants set the base for new projects like the creation of CD-ROMs for Arabic music education. The AAM, in search of income-generating projects, is also considering the design and creation of a Web site on the Internet.

Dr. Fakhouri expressed regrets about the very limited number of attendants, particularly from the Jordanian side.

CONCERT		what's going on		namely Dmoerise (11:20 a.m. - 12:35 p.m.) and performance of the 42nd Street Collage at 7:00 p.m.	
* "Vienna Classics" by Helmut Burghard at the National Music Conservatory at 6:00 p.m.					
FILMS					
* "King-Rat (Black & White)" at the British Council, Jabal Amman on Tuesday, March 17, at 6:00 p.m.					
* "Trois hommes et une cruche" at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh at 6:30 and 8:30 p.m.					
WORLD SATELLITE INTERVIEW					
* A worldnet satellite interview on Security with Ian Lesser, senior analyst at RAND, specialising in strategic studies and Mediterranean Security, former member of the Secretary of State's policy planning					
staff in charge of the multilateral track of the Middle East peace process, at the American Center (USIS video room), Amman (3:00-4:00 p.m.). (Interviewers will be Deputy Nayer Mawla and Dr. Hussein Taha)					
LA FRANCOPHONIE WEEK					
* Seminar entitled "Langue et présence" at the House of the City Hall, Amman Municipality, Ras Al 'Ain at 8:30 p.m.					
THE THIRD AMMAN BAILET FESTIVAL					
* Two performances at the New English School, Khaldi (Tel. 55171116),					
LECTURES					
* "The Civic Society and Political Pluralism in the Arab World" (in Arabic) by Dr. Ali Al-Din Hilal at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman at 6:00 p.m.					
* The first lecture of "The President's Lecture Series" entitled: "Caring for Creation: A Biblical Perspective for Environmental Action" by Dr. Lynton Museiman at the Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary, Sweifiah on Tuesday, March 17 at 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m. (for reservation 863976).					

Jordan Times

In independent and impartial reporting, the Jordan Times is committed to providing the highest quality news and analysis to its readers.

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Scrutiny for equality

THE DRAFT parliamentary election law that the government intends to submit to Parliament maintains current ethnic and religious quotas but has no provision to allocate quota seats for women. This much was made public by Minister of Interior Nahir Rashid Saturday when he confirmed that "there will be no changes in the current quota system." Accordingly Christians estimated to constitute six per cent of the population would be allocated nine seats in the 80-member Lower House, Chechens and Circassians whose exact number has yet to be made public would be assigned three seats. Women who make up half of the population are not being given any special treatment even though women rights advocates have called for at least a temporary quota system for their parliamentary candidates. All 17 women candidates during the last November parliamentary elections lost their bids including Toujan Faisal who ironically lost her seat because she ran for elections as a Circassian. Had she run merely as an individual, she would have easily won the race.

Such anomalies in past and future elections laws need additional scrutiny. For starters we believe that on the basis of Jordan's treaty obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) the quota system per se is unacceptable except when their sizes are proportionately large. If we were to take seriously the proposition that Jordanians are equal before the law, then all election legislation incorporating the quota system becomes culprit for treating voters unequally.

The government would be well-advised to seek a second opinion from the UN Human Rights Committee which monitors the application of ICCPR before it proceeds any further in adopting a new elections law. If despite our treaty obligations and even the requirements of our own Constitution (which demands equal treatment for all Jordanians irrespective of their faith, colour, race or ethnic origin), we still insist on adopting the quota system, then women would have the right to ask why (they who constitute half of our 4.5 million population) are excluded from this controversial quota criteria. Besides all they are asking for a temporary quota system for them to the tune of only 20 per cent of parliamentary seats all they wish up with men in voting strength. As a matter of fact most democratic countries which have shunned the quota criterion altogether did come up with and adopt affirmative action policies that aim to strengthen the stature of women nationally and internationally.

As for ethnic and religious minorities the rule of thumb internationally has been to accord them their own house of representation. If their size is so large as to warrant this special treatment, neither religious nor ethnic minorities in our country would qualify for such a treatment. This is why perhaps we have to be extra careful and sensitive in dealing with the issue of sex equality in as far as political representation at least is concerned.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Arab Al Yawm's Nida Nasser called for international protection of the Palestinian people in light of the atrocities committed against them by the Israeli occupation forces and Jewish settlers. The recent events in the occupied lands have manifested the criminal nature of the Israeli forces against the civilian population in an occupied territory, and the world community has a moral and legal responsibility under the U.N. charter to find means to protect this people's human rights, demanded the writer. The Madrid peace conference of 1991 has obviously succeeded only in consecrating the perpetration of Israeli occupation of Arab territories and proved beyond doubt that the U.S., which is supposed to be the sponsor of the peace process, is impotent and cannot exert any pressure on its Israeli ally to be committed to the U.N.-sponsored accords, he added. The writer said, at the same time the U.S. as well as Israel have, since the Madrid conference, excluded the U.N. from the peace-making process thus rendering it futile. He said the Arab countries should take the initiative and call for U.N. intervention and U.N. protection for the people of Palestine.

Al Ra'i's Taysir Zabri urged the Arab countries to bring Iraq back into the Arab fold following seven years of U.N. sanctions that crippled the Iraqi economy and starved the Iraqi population. Zabri said the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 caused agencies under the umbrella of the Arab League to be frozen and paralysed the Arab League Council because the invasion tore the Arab World apart. But after all these years of divisions and disputes the Arab countries find themselves unable to cope with developments in their region and that they can only do that if they were united, according to the writer. He said it has been proved that the Gulf states cannot enjoy stability as long as the situation in Iraq remains precarious and that the Arab-Israeli conflict cannot be settled without true solidarity and collective action on the part of a united Arab front. The way to address this situation, he said, lies in convening an Arab summit meeting where Arab issues can be discussed at the highest level and where it is possible to find a way to heal the rift among the Arab states.

Economic Review

Dr. Yusuf Mansur

Easy in, easy out: The way to foreign direct investment

THE INVESTMENT Promotion Corporation, with the help of USAI, sponsored a presentation at the Marriott Hotel last week by RSI International, one of the leading consulting houses in the U.S.

The presentation focused on commercial policy and what it would take to attract foreign direct investment to Jordan. The analysis was sound and the model that was developed by the consultants should be updated yearly, at least, as part of a national set of analytical tools to be used in strategic (something that is still absent from planners' psyche) decision making, when planning to attract investors.

It struck me and many others present at the workshop that during the period of investigation (1990-95) foreign direct investment (FDI) flows to Jordan averaged zero per cent of GDP, while the index for the compatibility of its commercial policy had the not so bad score of 77 per cent. I believe that the index could be lower for Jordan given several factors that the SRI consultants have missed such as labour market distortions and a sales-tax policy used to supplement a seemingly low tariff rate of 16 per cent and thus stifle the flow of imports. There are many other similar points that could have lowered the index. The fact that FDI averaged zero was not at all shocking.

This is a fact that has been pointed out in this column on many occasions. (FDI has fluctuated yearly in a sinusoidal manner between 1990-1996 from small positive peaks to deep negative troughs.) The anomaly lies in the fact that our commercial policy is sound while FDI is non-

existent. According to the index, there is no longer a need for a major overhaul of commercial policy. We have done well in that respect (See for example the New Customs Law, Safeguard Law, and Investment Promotion Law, Draft Antitrust Law, revised intellectual property rights legislation, Securities Law, and many others). So, where are the FDI's? They are not coming yet. They need much more. What may seem anomalous at first glance can be logically and may be easily explained.

Actually, Jordan needs a new type of microanalysis that reviews the many small actions that must be taken to attract FDI's. Jordan's investment promotion strategy should be divided into three components: before, during and after. The before stage would comprise of a set of well-targeted advertising that distinguishes Jordan from the rest of the region as a sound investment place. (One of the drawbacks of being a sound and stable economy in a somewhat unstable region is that one has to continuously assert to the world, particularly investors, the uniqueness of Jordan: it is not Algeria, Lebanon, Israel, Iraq, Iran, Libya or Saudi Arabia.)

Furthermore, data on the micro economy should be generated and made available to investors worldwide. (This is more important to investors than macro data, which they can obtain, virtually, anywhere and it is usually useless.) Also, investors must have easy access upon their arrival in Jordan, or even before, to many of the items that are still missing here: an up-to-date telephone directory that has all the

nation's phone numbers (in other countries it is now on CDs; easy telephone connection (not the usual waste-vested approach); street, city and country maps, road signs that are bilingual (would someone please remove the signs and pictures of the parliamentary hopefuls off the road signs). These small things, in addition to the other more glamorous schemes, facilitate the flow not only of FDI but also of domestic direct investment as Jordanians become more aware of their country, thence, the investment opportunities available in it.

The "during" phase must incorporate many elements such as easy start-up procedures, short set up period, little to no red-tape, low imports on inputs, commercial policy, protection of intellectual and industrial property rights, transparent legislation and a high-tech infrastructure that facilitates the transfer of know-how via electronic means.

Jordan has achieved tremendous advances in other areas, which relate to providing a stable economic-political environment. In the "after" phase businesses must be able to close down easily instead of lingering forever in the hallways of power and bureaucracy and must be able to repatriate their money.

This facilitates the replacement of the inefficient with more efficient firms. Therefore, "Easy in, easy out" should be the motto for attracting foreign direct investment to Jordan.

What Jordan needs now are thousands of small changes and not a new glamorous, character-building macro scheme. Let's not wait too long.

Cost of grade inflation: Cheapened diplomas

By Brent Staples

NEW YORK — The economist Milton Friedman taught that superior products flourish and shabby ones die out when consumers vote emphatically with their dollars. But the truth of the marketplace is that shabby products can do just fine if they sustain the veneer of quality while slipping downhill, as has much of higher education.

Faced with demanding consumers and stiff competition, colleges have simply issued more and more top marks, stoking grade inflation and devaluing degrees.

At most American universities, an A is the top mark a student can earn, while an F is the lowest. Grade inflation is in full gallop at every level, from struggling community institutions to the elites of the Ivy League. In some cases, campuswide averages have crept up from a C just 10 years ago to B-plus today.

Some departments shower students with A's to fill poorly attended courses that might otherwise be cancelled. Individual professors inflate grades after consumer-conscious administrators hound them into it. Professors at every level inflate to escape negative evaluations by students, whose opinions now figure in tenure and promotion decisions.

The most vulnerable teachers are the part-time instructors who have no job security and who now teach more than half of all college courses.

Writing in the most recent issue of the journal *Academe*, two part-timers suggest that students routinely corner adjuncts, threatening to complain if they do not turn C's into A's. A professor at an Ivy League college said recently that if tenure disappeared, universities would be "free to sell diplomas outright."

The consumer appetite for less rigorous education is nowhere more evident than in the University of Phoenix, a for-profit school that shuns traditional scholarship and offers a curriculum so superficial that critics compare it to a drive-through restaurant.

Two hundred colleges have closed since a businessman dreamed up Phoenix 20 years ago. Meanwhile, the institution has expanded to 60 sites around the country, and more than 40,000 students, making it the country's largest private university.

This article was reprinted from the *International Herald Tribune*.

LETTERS

More decisive action needed

To the editor:

THE RISING tide of nationalistic sentiment which is now spreading across former eastern bloc nations is reaching its climax. The collapse and the fragmentation of former Yugoslavia and the creation of three separate entities within Bosnia has settled the civil war for the meantime. But the real perpetrators have never been brought to a war crimes tribunal to face charges for their crimes committed against humanity. It is only when those war criminals are brought to justice that real reconciliation begins. But with the recent outbreak of violence in the Kosovo region and the unprecedented ruthlessness displayed by certain paratroopers in quelling the riots has focused the attention of international community again on President Slobodan Milosevic and to his ever hard stance to create a Greater Serbia.

The Serbian president can only envisage a Greater Serbia without any ethnic minority that might one day claim sovereignty on one of its disputed territories.

President Milosevic played on the reluctance of the international community to further realise his policy of ethnic cleansing of non-Serb communities.

Any further threatening of economic sanctions and an arms embargo against Serbia will not be an effective deterrent because ordinary Serbs, suffering economic hardship caused by crippling sanctions enforced during the Bosnian war, will feel that they have nothing to lose.

The U.S. administration, feeling compelled to act swiftly since it was the key broker of the Dayton peace accords, should send a clear message to President Milosevic that he will not benefit in any way from the reluctance of the international community. Washington will only intervene militarily if it finds that the conflict in Kosovo may spread uncontrollably to include its two major NATO allies Turkey and Greece.

The U.S. administration stated clearly during the Bosnian war that it would not intervene unless there was the will and determination on both sides to resolve the conflict peacefully. Unfortunately, in Bosnia, it took a terrible loss of human life and realisation by the three warring parties that there will not be a one-winner scenario. Taking that into account, President Milosevic's conviction is that the Kosovo conflict is an internal problem because he considers Kosovo the cradle of Serbian historic ancestry and thus he will not allow any peaceful solution enforced by any outside intervention force.

It was only when President Milosevic abolished Kosovo's self-rule status in 1989 that the Kosovo Liberation Front was created. Its members benefited from the civil unrest in motherland Albania by smuggling large amounts of arms and ammunition across the border.

The prospect of war spreading across the Balkan region is still unpredictable. But with the presence of large ethnic Albanian minorities in both Macedonia and Turkey and with the latest news that ethnic Albanian volunteers are crossing the border from Macedonia, the outbreak of war is more than ever likely. It is a matter of urgency that the international group responsible for the implementation of Dayton peace agreement give a mandate to the NATO forces to arrest the main perpetrators of the recent atrocities in the Prekaz province and have them stand trial before the International War Crime Tribunal in the Hague.

Feridon Jaimoukha
Amman

Human Rights File

Right to self-determination tested in Canada

By Waleed M. Sadi

RECENTLY OTTAWA submitted a motion to the Supreme Court of Canada requesting legal guidance on whether the Province of Quebec can lawfully secede from the Canadian confederation and if so on what basis. This intervention by the central government of Canada came in the wake of repeated failed referendums held by Quebec on secession from the Canadian union and against the backdrop of the decision by Quebec to yet again hold plebiscites in the future on the same issue. Quebec of course objected vehemently to the submission of its quest for independence to a judicial review on the ground that the exercise of self-determination by Quebec is a political issue and not a juridical concern.

It goes without saying that the exercise of the right to self-determination tops most human rights and is highlighted by human rights instruments as a high priority on the basis of which other human rights may be promoted and protected. The Charter of the United Nations speaks of the right to self-determination as sine qua non to the fulfillment of other human rights and the attainment of international peace and security. Both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) as well as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) give prominence to self-determination. Article 1 of ICCPR states that "all peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development." Identical language is found in the ICESCR. Other human rights conventions whether on the rights of the child or the rights of women convey identical principled views on the subject. "All" peoples wherever they are and whatever the conditions under which they live are entitled to this right. This includes peoples under domination or occupation. It also means that the enjoyment of the right of self-determination is an ongoing right that does not cease at any stage including the attainment of independence.

Yet the jurisprudence on the exercise of the right of self-determination by a state or a province within a federated country is scant. The rule of thumb is that part of a federal country may opt to leave the federation through a plebiscite, but this political decision must be conducted in an orderly and lawful way. Usually the federal constitution provides how a state within the federation may secede. In the absence of any such language in the organic law of the federal system, the central government is duty bound to seek guidance from the highest court of the land. Quebec may have the political right to secede, but this exercise of this political decision must comply either with the Canadian Federal law or the Canadian Supreme Court interpretation of this law.

Quebec submits that a mere 51 per cent margin of approval of secession is all that is necessary for it to declare independence. This stance is rejected by Ottawa which contends that a highly important issue such as a secession cannot be determined by a thin edge margin. This is where a judicial review is necessary. Obviously self-determination cannot and should not be decided by a simple majority. Quebec should be the first to concede that determining its status within Canada after centuries of association cannot be made lightly. Whether the people of Quebec opt to stay within Canada or establish their own independent and sovereign state, the decision must be made by at least a two-thirds majority. Quebec should therefore give its blessing to a judicial intervention by the Supreme Court of Canada to prescribe the formalities for deciding its quest for "sovereignty." No people or nation may decide its fate on shallow grounds especially when it had formed a part of a federated state for centuries and its people and the other peoples of the union had developed vested interests in federation and forged long-term relations on its basis. Breaking away from a country is a solemn and very serious step which cannot and should not be determined lightly. As much as any such decision is essentially political it is also a legal issue that calls for the closest legal scrutiny.

Putting aside Quebec's obsession with attaining sovereignty, it must be conceded that for all intents and purposes it is already a sovereign province. Quebec runs its own house in every sense of the word, has its own borders, its own seat of government, its own judiciary, its own police and even immigration policy. The preservation of the French culture and identity can take many forms within and without the Canadian Confederation. Canada is now an Anglo-Franco nation. Without Quebec, it would become a strictly Anglophone country. Greater wisdom and statesmanship would call for the continuation of an Anglo-Franco Canadian nation where the Quebecois and the Quebecois can play their pivotal role in shaping the future of Canada. Which is more important for the French culture and identity: a Francophone Quebec or an Anglo-Franco Canada?

The determination of this issue in Canada would have implications on similar issues in other regions of the world. The Kosovo conflict is the most recent example of the struggle for the exercise of the right of self-determination. Unlike the Quebec case, the question of Kosovo presents a different set of factors that makes it distinguishable especially on the ground that over 90 per cent of the population are Albanians exercising minimum or no autonomy at all and effectively under the military domination of the Serbs in Belgrade. In retrospect, the Kosovo people are justified in opting out, but the Quebecois are not. The reason is obvious: over 90 per cent of the Kosovo people want independence, but only 50 per cent of the Quebecois people want it. That is a significant difference which warrants different treatments of the two cases.

كنا من الابد

Tell el-Hammeh dig locates evidence of iron smelting industry in central Jordan Valley

TWO BRIEF seasons of excavations in 1996-97 by a Dutch-Jordanian team at Tell el-Hammeh, on the north bank of the Zarqa River in the central Jordan Valley, have revealed evidence of iron smelting in the late Iron Age as well as evidence of settlements in two earlier periods that had not been detected by previous surface surveys of the site. The work, directed by Evelyn J. van der Steen of Leiden University (The Netherlands), is part of the ongoing excavations at nearby Tell Deir Alla, 2.5 kilometres to the west.

The site had been identified and surface surveyed by several scholars since the early 1950s, and had always been seen primarily as a settlement from the Early Bronze Age and the Early Iron-to-Persian periods. The excavations aimed to integrate Tell el-Hammeh into the regional context of the much bigger Tell Deir Alla mound, and also to save it from possible total destruction because one side of the mound had already been sliced away by

seems to be related to the pottery of Tell Abu Hamid," a large site from that period located in the central Jordan Valley to the north-west.

The Late Bronze Age remains (c. 1500-1200 BC) above the Chalcolithic settlement was also a surprise, as this era had also not been hinted at by the surveys' evidence. The earliest LB occupation comprised wash and surface layers with many cooking pots, some rather fine ware with white and pink slip and painted decoration, and a few small chocolate-on-white sherds, with the highest concentration in the centre of the tell.

The EB layers were cut by pits from later phases, as occurs at Tell Deir Alla and other sites in the central valley, usually indicating the activities of farmers or farmers/pastoralists.

Above the earliest EB layers was a surface covered with stones, perhaps a crude or irregular pavement of sorts, that was covered with a layer of soil with pebbles and much pottery. Stones are plentiful in



Part of the mound of Tell el-Hammeh was sliced away and destroyed by bulldozer activity, leaving the flat ground at left of this photo; the rest of the tell is seen at right (Photo by Hans-Dieter Bliener)

900 B.C.), was evidenced by walls that seem to belong to at least three different structures.

Most walls consisted of mudbricks placed on top of several layers of boulders laid on the ground without foundation trenches. This construction method is still used today in the valley, Ms. van der Steen notes, for the bottom layer of stones prevents undermining of the walls by rain.

tered. A sequence of slag layers beneath it suggested that several successive furnaces may have been built on the same spot. A stone pavement or paved street on the south of the tell, with some slag between the stones, also may belong to the Late Iron period.

The northern side of the site was most open to the eastern winds that are so frequent there, Ms. van der Steen noted, making it suitable for the smelt-

ing process that required wind to keep the furnaces stoked. These Late Iron Age levels, including the smelting system, have been provisionally dated to the early 8th Century BC, primarily on the basis of the pottery.

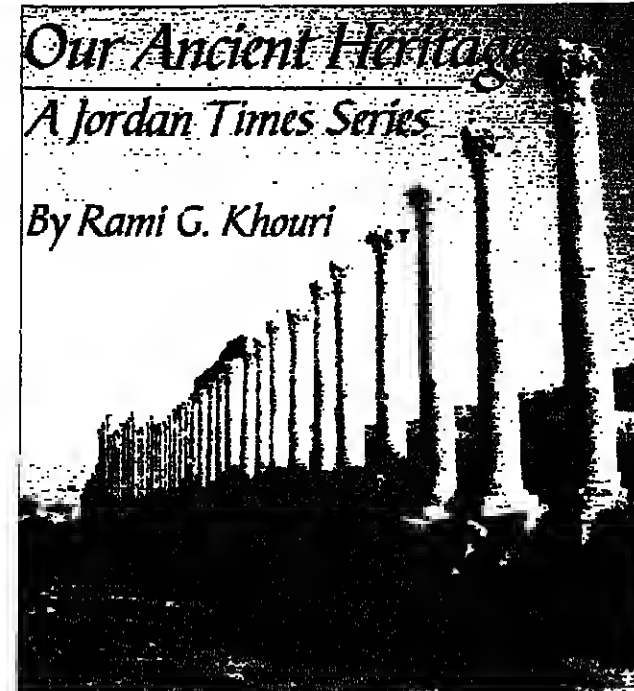
Mysterious, large pits

The main feature of the next phase of the Late Iron Age settlement was a huge pit measuring nearly

seven metres in diameter, lined with mudbricks and with stones at the bottom, similar to pits found at Tell Deir Alla. The function of these structures is not known. They are dated to around 700 BC. A nearby activity area comprised a round installation about one metre in diameter made of small stones, with a large number of loomweights and two grinding stones, and a very high concentration of sherds on its surface area.

The final Persian Period (539-332 BC) phase, immediately below topsoil, is dominated by a large building whose walls are made of dressed blocks resting on deep foundation trenches. Other walls and a trench or ditch also date from this period.

Ms. van der Steen says that even though the analysis of the finds is in its early stages, "it is already clear that Tell el-Hammeh must have been an important site, especially in the Iron Age II, and it may well have been the centre of the iron industry in the region in the eighth



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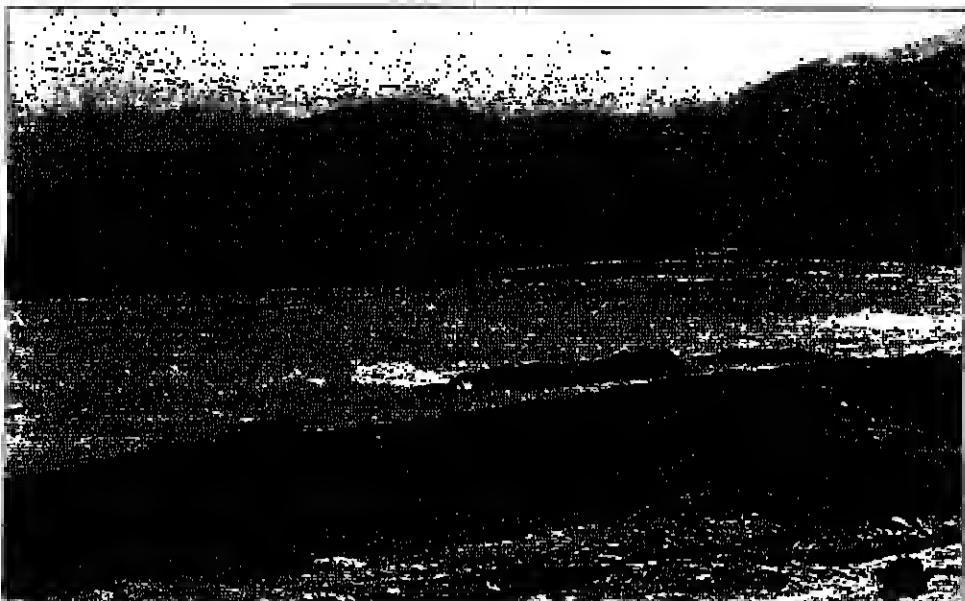
By Rami G. Khouri

century BC". The discovery of the Iron Age iron smelting works is perhaps the most exciting aspect of the dig to date, because scholars have always known about, but could never firmly identify, the later Iron Age smelting centre in the central valley area. Several possible candidates, including Tell Deir Alla, have always been in contention, "but never before had we found convincing proof for any of these possible sites, so perhaps now Tell el-Hammeh will provide the answer," Ms. van der Steen concluded.

The raw iron ore almost certainly came from the Wardah mines in the hills to the north-east, between the valley and the Jerash-Ajloun area.

The iron smelting industry at Tell el-Hammeh corresponds to one of the main occupation periods at Tell Deir Alla, notes the co-director of the overall Tell Deir Alla project Dr. Gerrit van der Kooij of Leiden University, who shares overall management of the project with Dr. Zeidan Kafafi of Yarmouk University.

The two seasons of work at Tell el-Hammeh have been funded by the Tell Deir Alla expedition, with the Department of Antiquities of Jordan also funding part of the second season.



The Zarqa River (foreground) runs immediately south of Tell el-Hammeh, which is the low, light-coloured mound in the centre of photo (Photo by Hans-Dieter Bliener)

farmers preparing their fields (ironically, though, the farmers' bulldozer cuts provided the archaeologists with a ready-made cut-away section of the tell which was quickly cleaned and provided a quick view of the site's stratified ancient occupational history).

More specific goals were to clarify its ancient settlement patterns, and to explore the hypothesis that a trade route passed from the Deir Alla-Tell el-Hammeh area, through the Wadi Zarqa, to the Baq'aa valley.

The clear occupational sequence that was visible in the bulldozer cut revealed that the earliest settlements at the site were from the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Ages (around 5500-2000 BC). Excavations in four squares throughout the site revealed Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age layers comprising mudbrick walls associated with pottery, layers of ash, and burnt rubble containing a high concentration of burnt bone.

The presence of a Chalcolithic settlement was a surprise, as no Chalcolithic pottery had ever been documented by the several surveys earlier this century. Ms. van der Steen says that "the Chalcolithic pottery

this area and in antiquity provided a convenient building material for walls, courtyard partitions, fireplaces, potstands, pavements, and other facilities," Ms. van der Steen says.

The pits were covered with surfaces showing signs of household activities, such as ash, burnt surfaces and many pottery sherds, dated to the end of the Late Bronze Age and the beginning



A scarab made of soft gray stone, from the Persian period, excavated at Tell el-Hammeh (Photo courtesy of Evelyn J. van der Steen)

of the Iron Age. Also found associated with the LB pits were a fireplace, a tannur (cooking/bread oven), a kind of burnt round clay platform measuring 30 cm. in diameter, and many cooking pots. A north-south row of stones seems to form an irregular wall or boundary.

The next major town, from the end of the Iron I period (c. 1000-

Associated with these Late Iron I structures was a courtyard, two tannurs, a possible fireplace, and a small circle of pebbles that may have served as a cooking pot stand, and this entire activity area was found covered with burnt rubble containing roof debris.

From the late Iron Age (c. 900-600 BC) settlement the excavators unearthed the remains of a large building with at least three walls, one of which may have been an external courtyard wall. A row of 30-cm-high standing stones was found in their original place inside the building, and at one stage in the building's life the space between the stones was closed with mudbricks.

Outside the buildings, probably from a time when the building had gone out of use, were the remains of what the excavators call "a rather large-scale iron industry," evidenced by heavy ash and slag between the courtyard wall and the wall of the building, and at least three furnaces. One furnace was a rounded structure with an outer diameter of about 2 metres (mostly bulldozed away) built of mudbricks that had been burnt bright green and partly sin-

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Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Registration fees impede investments — Nabulsi

IN A letter to Al Ra'i, the former governor of the Central Bank of Jordan said the opposition raised by public shareholding companies to higher listing fees overlooked a harsher and more dangerous measure that affects investments in general. In his letters, the former governor, Mohammad Said Nabulsi, expounded upon the "incredible" recent developments that public shareholding companies have to face upon registering at the Ministry of Industry and Trade and the Amman Financial Market.

He indicated that under a new regulation, public shareholding companies have to pay JD3 per every thousand dinars of the authorized capital as a registration fee, instead of the previous JD1 per every thousand. In addition, stamps at a rate of JD3 per every thousand should be affixed to the registration application. As such, public shareholding companies which reach the stage of registration have to pay a gross fee of JD6 per thousand to the comptroller of companies instead of JD3 per thousand as was the case before the new regulations.

"This fee does not exist in many countries of the world and, if it is to be found, the rate would be much lower and only imposed on the paid-up and not the authorized capital," Dr. Nabulsi wrote. He continued: "It goes without saying that the fee is basically not justified as a registration fee except in a very limited sense."

Dr. Nabulsi said that if a new public shareholding company with a JD10 million capital is to be registered, it has to

pay JD60,000 for very little work. "This can be considered as a high tax on a project that has not taken off," the former Central Bank head said. "Why should a regulation hike the registration fee three-fold at a time when it is difficult to justify the original fee?" he asked.

The respected financier and economic advisor moved to the requirement for registering the company at the Amman Financial Market (the stock exchange) and pointed out that the registration fee there was JD5 per thousand before, at a later stage, the company has to pay a listing fee. Although the listing fee could not exceed a JD10,000 ceiling regardless of the company's capital, the registration fee at the stock exchange had no ceiling.

By simple calculation, Dr. Nabulsi said, the JD10 million company has now to pay an addition JD50,000 registration fee, bringing the total up to JD110,000 before starting to work. "This amount discourages establishing public shareholding companies and discourages investments in general," he added.

Dr. Nabulsi concluded by pointing out that the strange thing was that the fees were raised for registration at the ministry and at the stock exchange at the same time "without the right hand knowing what the left hand was doing."

"If the reason to raise the registration fee at the stock exchange is the upgrading of the control and supervision procedures, what is the justification for maintaining, not to say hiking, the registration fees at the ministry," Dr. Nabulsi asked.

JMRC to finance housing projects through Arab Land Bank

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan Mortgage Refinance Company (JMRC) will extend two loans for the Arab Land Bank to finance housing projects for the bank's clients and employees.

JMRC Director General Zuhair Khalifah said Sunday. He indicated that the first loan, amounting to JD375,000, will help in financing housing loans given to the bank's clients while the second loan of JD303,000 will finance housing loans for the bank's employees.

Dr. Khalifah told the Jordan Times that the two loans, having a grace period of two years and carrying a 9.5% interest rate, are the first of such types in the Kingdom.

Interest rates, to be reviewed between the two sides, are payable every six months.

Dr. Khalifah said the agreement with the bank stipulates that the two loans should be paid after two years.

"The difference between this type of loans and others is that it offers medium-and long-term financing used for long-term loans by the bank," Dr. Khalifah said. "So instead of using the bank's short-term deposits to finance long-term housing projects, JMRC will give them money to finance these ventures," Dr. Khalifah said.

He explained that the two-year-old JMRC, with a capital of JD5 million, was established to finance housing projects in the country.

The JMRC, an intermediary financing company with 16 different investors participating in the project, is planning to float securities at the Amman Financial Market (AFM) this year, Dr. Khalifah said.

The company's board of directors includes representatives of several public firms, commercial banks and the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ). The CBJ governor heads the board of director.

In addition to the JMRC's capital, the firm has an additional amount of JD20 million, which it obtained from the government through a loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) to finance housing projects in the country.



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REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates Prices as at 15/03/98 19:03

Currency	US Dollar	DE Mark	GB Sterling	CHF Franc	JP Yen	CA Dollar	IT Lira	NL Guilder	FR Franc
US Dollar	1.0000	1.8115	0.5988	1.4745	128.10	1.4085	1790.00	2.0476	0.0970
DE Mark	0.5520	1.0000	0.5302	0.5138	70.70	0.7775	867.80	1.1302	3.3864
GB Sterling	1.6700	3.0380	1.0000	2.4603	213.48	2.3522	2869.30	3.4195	10.1820
CHF Franc	0.8782	1.2282	0.4087	1.0000	88.85	0.9549	1213.56	138.80	4.1338
JP Yen	0.0078	1.4137	0.4670	1.1806	1.0000	1.0991	13.97	159.78	4.7577
CA Dollar	0.7108	1.2893	0.4304	1.0498	1.10	1.2685	1.4543	4.3261	12.2251
IT Lira	0.0008	1.0116	0.3341	0.0623	1398.58	0.7864	1.143	3.4042	11.43
NL Guilder	0.4884	0.8646	0.2922	0.2922	72.00	0.8262	0.8877	0.7336	2.2768
FR Franc	0.1640	0.2970	0.0981	0.2478	20.89	0.2308	33.57	33.5700	1.0000

Middle Eastern Currencies

Currency	US Dollar	Jordan Dinar	Saudi Riyal	Bahrain Dinar	Qatar Dinar	Kuwait Dinar	Emirate Dinar	Lebanese L1000	Egyptian
US Dollar	1.0000	0.7090	3.7096	0.3770	3.6410	0.3048	3.6729	1628.00	3.4000
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	1.0000	5.2800	0.5317	5.1404	0.4301	5.1804	2165.15	4.7866
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.1890	1.0000	0.1005	0.97	0.0813	0.98	407.40	0.9065
Bahrain Dinar	2.85	3.8895	9.5485	1.0000	9.88	0.8088	9.74	4063.05	9.0188
Qatar Dinar	0.2746	0.1947	1.0301	1.0301	1.0000	0.8038	1.01	419.86	0.9338
Kuwait Dinar	3.2793	2.3295	12.2895	1.2383	11.94	12.04	9010.82	0.9338	0.9338
Emirate Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0212	1.0208	0.9813	0.0830	1.00	416.02	0.9257
Lebanese L1000	0.85	0.4640	2.4546	0.2487	2.3828	0.1896	2.4037	1.0000	2.2251
Egyptian	0.2941	0.2086	1.1031	0.1109	1.0709	0.0897	1.0803	448.41	1.0000

Energy

Commodity	Price
Brent	12.27
WTI Texas	14.15
Bonny	12.27
Dubai	10.85
UL Gas	137.00

Mid-East Currencies

Currency	US Dollar	SA Riyal	AE Dirham	KW Dinar	BH Dinar	CY Pound
US Dollar	1.0000	0.2666	0.4301	0.1696	0.3927	34.1882
SA Riyal	0.3770	1.0000	0.16303	0.40159	34.8906	1.0000
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.4301	1.0000	0.4301	420.168	1.0000
KW Dinar	3.2793	5.9417	1.8638	4.93793	323.906	1.0000
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.9076	1.5881	3.51236	333.906	1.0000
CY Pound	1.8861	3.415	1.1281	2.7796	241.481	1.0000

JOD Cross Rates

Currency	Buy	Sell
US Dollar	0.708	0.710
GB Sterling	1.4814	1.4873
DE Mark	0.5881	0.591
CHF Franc	0.4789	0.4823
FR Franc	0.110	0.1166
JP Yen	0.00623	0.00681
NL Guilder	0.3464	0.3471
IT Lira	0.585	0.597

Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)

Currency	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year
USD	5.56	5.56	5.56	5.56
GBP	7.25	7.40	7.40	7.40
JPY	0.51	0.56	0.62	0.47
DEM	3.40	3.42	3.63	3.38
FRF	3.61	3.62	3.62	3.68
CHF	1.12	1.10	1.19	1.12
ITL	5.88	5.57	5.10	4.83

Main Equity Indices

Index	Value	Change
New York DOW JONES	8802.52	-57.04
New York S&P 500	1066.81	-0.12
London FTSE 100	5782.3	-12.5
Tokyo Nikkei 225	17088.14	-484.32
Paris CAC 40	3540.23	13.86
Frankfurt DAX	4838.85	30.05

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHMELANI											
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 15/03/1998											
PAST 12 MONTHS	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	QTY.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE		
346.000	250.000	ARAB BANK	13.9	1.18	2	40	13560	340.00	339.00	1.00	-
2.340	1.480	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	8	0.00	2	550	963	1.74	1.75	0.01	+
2.680	1.650	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	10.4	6.03	24	30168	52376	1.75	1.73	0.02	-
5.300	4.610	THE HOUSING BK.	29.8	1.95	2	3400	16932	4.95	4.98	0.03	+
2.700	2.700	ARAB JOR. INV. BK./WEM	10.0	0.00	3	16666	48998	2.70	2.70	0.00	-
4.020	1.990	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	10.3	4.75	11	4850	9810	2.02	2.02	0.00	-
1.460	1.800	BEIT AL-HAL (BEITNA)	-6	16.67	5	850	779	0.95	0.90	0.05	-
BANK SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 235.61 %CHG: -0.14											
2.400	1.590	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	5.7	12.25	2	450	918	2.15	2.04	0.11	-
2.300	1.200	HOLY LAND INSUR.	6.4	0.00	1	200	250	1.24	1.25	0.01	+
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 121.79 %CHG: -0.50											
2.140	1.550	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.8	4.95	15	8150	16524	2.06	2.02	0.04	-
4.030	1.320	IRBID ELECTRICITY	12.7	5.37	1	100	214	2.25	2.14	0.11	-
1.560	0.910	NATL. PORTFOLIO	43.5	0.00	9	4800	5237	1.11	1.05	0.06	-
1.120	0.850	REAL ESTATE INV.	13.9	6.00	1	50	1.01	1.01	0.00	0.01	-
0.590	0.370	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	19.5	0.00	1	500	190	0.39	0.38	0.01	-
9.350	6.700	ALBA	9.5	6.42	3	1500	14025	9.31	9.35	0.04	+
2.700	2.890	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	10.9	1.81	1	800	7664	4.43	4.41	0.02	-
1.090	0.900	ZARQA EDUCATION	0	0.00	4	2550	2429	0.96	0.96	0.00	-
1.830	1.630	UNIFIED CO.	7.1	6.83	20	11350	18350	1.64	1.61	0.03	-
0.810	0.600	UNION LAND DEV.	9	0.00	3	650	435	0.68	0.67	0.01	-
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 120.18 %CHG: -0.58											
1.160	0.930	ATTAMOROS	0	0.00	5	6950	7854	1.16	1.13	0.03	-
4.450	2.690	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	18.8	3.93	14	2047	5810	2.86	2.86	0.00	-
7.050	5.620	ARAB POTASH CO.	14.3	3.24	3	300	1790	6.20	5.90	0.30	-
11.150	9.200	JOR. PETRO. REFINERY	10.2	8.45	3	755	7964	10.65	10.52	0.13	-
1.390	1.040	WOOLLEN INDUSTRIES	10.1	8.55	2	400	468	1.23	1.17	0.06	-
2.490	1.250	INDUSTRIAL COM. AGR.	9	0.00	6	1450	1769	1.27	1.21	0.06	-
5.700	3.440	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	14.4	3.62	103	28157	146546	5.30	5.24	0.06	-
2.330	1.800	GENERAL MINING	9	0.00	2	219	453	2.18	2.07	0.11	-
8.540	5.000	ARAB CHEM. DISTRI.	23.3	3.95	1	100	760	8.00	7.60	0.40	-
1.420	0.770	RAPIA INDUSTRIES	0	0.00	8	2900	2469	0.88	0.87	0.01	-
6.350	4.400	QAR ALDAMA INV. INV.	15.2	4.03	2	250	1550	6.23	6.20	0.03	-
3.460	2.220	ARAB ALUM. IND.	6.5	8.99	3	1500	4170	2.90	2.79	0.12	-
0.640	0.400	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	10.4	0.00	19	32150	15825	0.50	0.49	0.01	-
0.510	0.310	NATIONAL INDUS.	9	0.00	1	750	420	0.57	0.56	0.01	-
0.960	0.510	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	2	7500	1100	1.45	1.44	0.01	-
1.670	0.810	UNIV. MOON INDUS.	0	0.00	65	54450	58582	1.08	1.06	0.02	-
1.620	1.350	NATL. CHLORINE	14.1	4.67	2	1000	1500	1.50	1.50	0.00	-
1.880	0.810	JOR. CABLE CO.	19.1	0.00	37	44240	18140	1.05	1.04	0.01	-
1.880	1.290	EL-SAY READY WEAR	48.2	0.00	2	500	688	1.39	1.37	0.02	-
1.250	1.080	INTL. TOBACCO	6.5	0.00	14	9950	11751	1.19	1.18	0.01	-
1.120	0.860	UNION ELECT. VEG.	0	0.00	27	30175	32145	1.08	1.07	0.01	-
0.850	0.660	JORDAN STEEL	36.2	6.25	9	8500	7640	0.82	0.80	0.02	-

Evert Cup

Hingis finds the silver lining on cloudy day

INDIAN WELLS (AFP) — World No. 1 Martina Hingis captured her second title of the year here Saturday with a straight-sets victory over Lindsay Davenport in the final of the Evert Cup.

Hingis, who successfully defended her Australian Open title in January, waited through a two-hour rain delay then needed just 63 minutes to beat Davenport 6-3, 6-4.

The 17-year-old Swiss, who played her semi-final against Venus Williams on Friday as well as a three-set doubles match, said she was pleased when she woke up and saw the rain.

"When I heard I had to play the finals at 11:00 a.m., I was like, 'no way I'm going to wake up so early,'" she said.

"I was kind of happy it rained. Tennis players are pretty spoiled... they don't really like to wake up early in the morning."

Davenport didn't wake up until the sixth game of the opening set.

"Normally, I'm a very fast starter," said Davenport, who dropped her serve twice to find herself down 5-0.

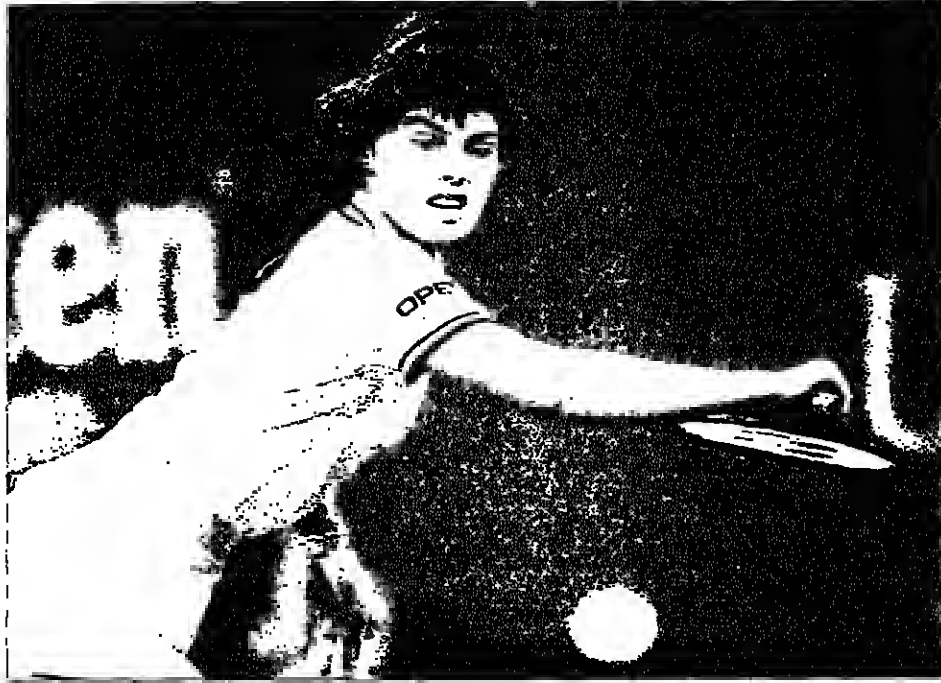
"I started slowly, that's one thing you can't do against the No. 1 player in the world, especially in a final. It's too big a hole to come back from."

Davenport dropped her serve for the first time with a double-fault and for the second with two forehand errors.

She finally held with two aces in the sixth game, and broke back in the seventh with a forehand cross-court winner off a Hingis drop shot.

The 21-year-old American, second in the world behind Hingis, saved a set point in the next game, but couldn't evade the inevitable.

"I was very self-confident after a couple of balls," Hingis said. "It calms me when I play good



Martina Hingis

in the beginning, so I feel OK and I'm not nervous anymore." Hingis avenged a defeat



Lindsay Davenport

by Davenport in the final of the Pan Pacific tournament in Tokyo in February, her only outdoor loss this year.

"When she loses to someone, she always comes back the next time even a little more fired up," Davenport said.

"I knew that I had beaten her three weeks ago, that she was going to want to play well and win today."

Hingis got the only break of the second set in the fifth game and never once faced a break point.

Her confidence let her experiment a little — at one point in the ninth game Davenport moved her out wide and Hingis simply switched her racket to her left hand. She made the shot but lost the rally as Davenport completed a love game.

"She even made it!" Davenport said of Hingis' switch to a southpaw stance. "Of course today she would make that."

"She hit some great shots today on the run," Davenport said. "She has fun out there."

Rangers' title hopes fade further

GLASGOW (AFP) — Rangers' hopes of clinching a record 10th successive Scottish Premier division title suffered a major setback when they crashed to a 2-1 defeat at struggling Motherwell on Saturday.

Willie Falconer scored a dramatic winner with a powerful header three minutes from the end when Owen Coyle floated in a cross from the left.

Rangers Old Firm rivals Celtic will now go seven points clear of them on Sunday if they beat Dundee United — and with only eight games left the gap between the two is starting to look unbridgeable.

Rangers manager Walter Smith admits that Celtic are in the driving seat.

He said: "It's obvious that this defeat today doesn't enhance our chances."

"If Celtic win tomorrow it gives them a margin of error and that is something we didn't want to happen."

Scotland veteran Ally McCoist marked his return to the Rangers starting line-up for only the second time in the league this season by opening the scoring in the 11th minute.

He could have had a hat-trick, watching in disbelief as two other efforts came back off the bar.

But Motherwell, who always seem to rise to the occasion when they play the Ibrox giants, were good value for their victory with Coyle equalising on the stroke of half-time.

Then came the winner from Falconer to complete a marvellous day for new Motherwell manager Harry Campbell making his bow at Fir Park.

Elsewhere, Hearts remain in second position — one point behind Celtic — but missed their chance to move top of the table after being held to a 1-1 draw at home to Kilmarnock.

In the day's other matches, Dunfermline and Aberdeen shared the points in a six-goal thriller while bottom club Hibernian grabbed a draw with a 90th minute penalty for a 1-1 draw against St Johnstone.



Inter Milan's Brazilian striker Ronaldo (R) pushes the ball to past Atalanta defender Andrea Sottil, during their Italian Serie A soccer match at Milan stadium. Internazionale Milan defeated Atalanta 4-0 (Reuters photo)

Napoli bring Juventus down to earth

MILAN (AFP) — Italian champions Juventus saw their four-point lead in the Serie A slashed in half on Saturday, after being held to a shock 2-2 home draw by 10-man bottom club Napoli.

Juventus finished the day with 53 points, while Lazio moved up to 51 after crushing Sampdoria 4-0. Inter Milan were one point behind Lazio after a similar 4-0 rout of nine-man Atalanta.

Juventus took a 45th minute lead, when Alessandro Del Piero slotted home his 17th goal of the season to become the Serie A's joint top-scorer with Udinese's German ace Oliver Bierhoff.

Napoli's Francesco Turrini levelled in the 68th minute, shortly before teenage Uruguayan substitute Marcelo Zalayeta scored his first goal for Juventus since making his full debut in midweek.

Napoli then had Roberto Gori sent off for a second bookable offence, and all hope looked lost as the game went into injury-time — only for Igor Protti to pop up with a dramatic equaliser.

Juventus coach Marcello Lippi shouldered all the blame, saying: "Obviously, I'm no longer capable of making myself understood. I left eight players behind for the Italian Cup tie against Lazio on Wednesday night, simply

because I wanted them to realise just how important I felt this match against Napoli was."

"But it wasn't enough. I also kept telling them to forget they were playing against the bottom club; but that wasn't enough either. We treated this like it was a Thursday afternoon kick-around."

"We gave Napoli five scoring chances, and with all due respect to them, that was far too many."

Lazio, who face a possible championship decider with Juventus on April 5 at the Olympic stadium, meanwhile extended their unbeaten run to 20 games.

There was a warm welcome for returning Sampdoria icon Roberto Mancini, who spent 15 years with the Genoa club before moving to Lazio last summer.

However, there no room for sentiment once the match got underway.

Vladimir Jugovic scored in the first minute and 20 minutes later Sampdoria had David Balleri sent off to a volley of objects from the angry home fans.

Czech midfielder Pavel Nedved, whose midweek brace against Juventus put Lazio into the Italian Cup final, made it 2-0 and Diego Fuser added two more to put the result beyond doubt.

Sampdoria striker Vincenzo Montella made life even easier for the visitors by missing his third consecutive penalty of the season.

But despite the handsome victory over his former club, Lazio coach Sven Goran Eriksson remained as cautious as ever.

"Let's not talk about the league title," he said. "We were in trouble in the first half and until we were 2-0 up Sampdoria were the better side."

As for his return to Genoa, the Swede said he was moved by the event "because I had five wonderful years here. But we're all professionals and we have to look forward."

However, Mancini admitted: "I'm glad to have won without scoring."

Inter meanwhile tried everything to get the better of Atalanta, who had Fabio Rustico sent off just before half-time for a second bookable offence, a particularly vicious foul on Ronaldo.

The breakthrough came in the 65th minute with a superb solo goal by Francesco Morici, the winger who is trying to play his way into Cesare Maldini's World Cup squad.

But there was even more emotion minutes later, when Kanu completed a miraculous return from heart surgery nearly 18 months ago by scoring his first goal for Inter, rewarded by a two minute ovation.

Ronaldo, who picked up his first ever booking in the Serie A (retaliation), added the third, Atalanta had Yugoslav defender Ljubisa Dundjerski sent off and French midfielder Benoit Cauet cracked home a free-kick to complete the rout.

Inter president Massimo Moratti said: "The objective is still the league title, and now that we're closer to Juventus, we mustn't let our concentration slip."

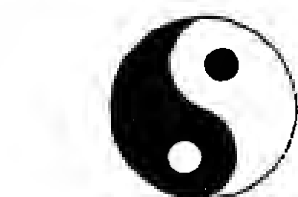
Moratti did not rejoice at Juventus' setback; his own team's blunders against lowly opposition this season being too fresh in the memory.

"It's often the matches which look the easiest on paper that bring the biggest disappointments," he declared. "Inter know something about that, in games like those they've lost a great deal."

"The important thing is that we've made up two points on Juventus, and that along with them and Lazio, we're going to fight right through the end."

Roberto Baggio didn't score but lined up all three of Bologna's goals as they beat European Cup Winners Cup hopefuls Vicenza 3-1.

Swedish giant Kennet Andersson scored twice, while Russian Igor Kolyanov notched the other.



TAI CHI CLASSES

Where?

At the Interfit Health Spa in the Inter-Continental Hotel.

What is Tai Chi?

The term Tai Chi refers to the Ancient Chinese cosmological concept of interplay between two opposite yet complimentary forces (Yin and Yang) as being the basis of the universe.

What are the benefits of Tai Chi?

Tai Chi has been found to be conducive to calming the mind, relaxing the body and relieving stress. The physical goals of this course are to improve balance, flexibility and strength. The mental and physical benefits result in general health enhancement and relaxation. The classes include basic exercise and stance-keeping movement training.

For more information, please call 4615825.



New Super Deluxe Villa For Sale

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Please contact Four Seasons Real-Estate Est.,
Telefax: 5533094

NOTICE OF SALE

Date and Time of Sale: TUESDAY, MARCH 17, 1998
9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Location: American Embassy Warehouse, Abdoun
(Use the Back Gate)

Items to be Sold: Office and Residential Furniture, Appliances, Equipment, Vehicles, and Miscellaneous

Conditions of Sale:

- Sale is conducted by sealed bid.
- All property is sold on as-is, where-is, non-returnable basis for cash payment without refund or warranty.
- Bid forms and list of lots will be available at time of sale.
- All items will be available for inspection at sale time.
- A deposit of 20% of the total bid is required at time of bid in cash JD only.
- All bids must be deposited by 12:00 p.m. on Tuesday March 17.
- All bidders will be notified and deposit refunded to unsuccessful bidders by Tuesday, March 17.
- All property must be paid for and removed by Wednesday, March 18.
- If not removed by March 18, a storage fee of JD50,000 per day for each lot will be imposed.

FOR SALE

- Mazda 626, 1995, PS, AC, AB, American system, duty unpaid.
 - Camcorder Panasonic, MS70, S.VHS.
- For more information call
Tel.: 5663672 (Mike)

FURNISHED APARTMENT FOR RENT

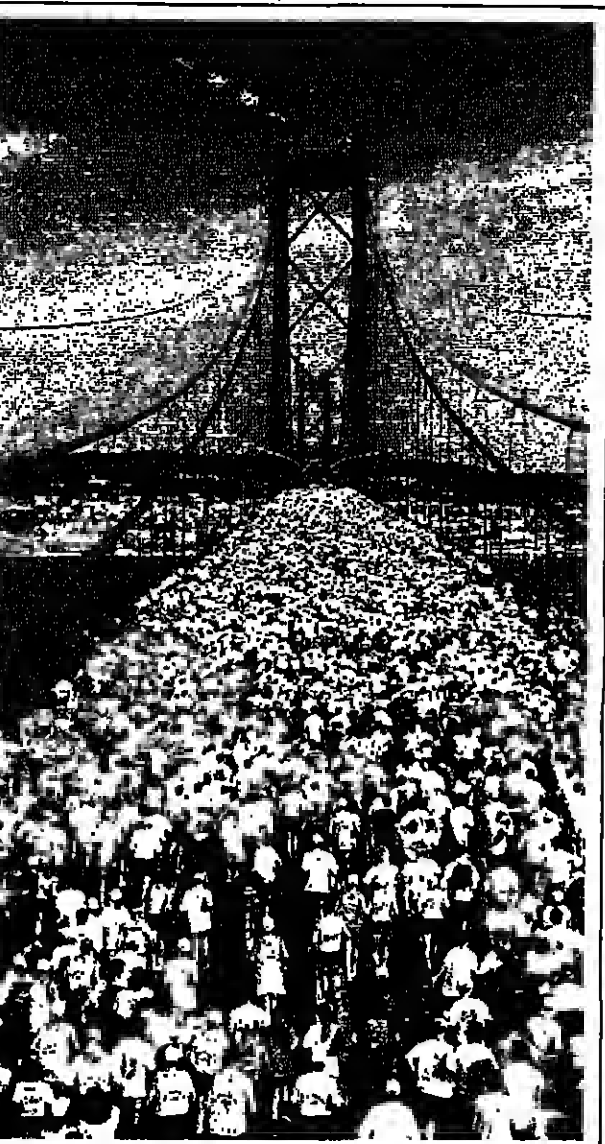
Located in Jabal Amman, near C-Town.
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TODAY AT	PHILADELPHIA '1' Demi Moore ... in G.I. JANE Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	PHILADELPHIA '2' Pierce Brosnan as James Bond... in 007...TOMORROW NEVER DIES Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	PLAZA The biggest cinema production TITANIC Shows: 3:00, 7:00, 10:30 p.m. I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER Shows: 12:30 p.m.	CONCORD Adel Imam & Yusra ... in RISALA ILA AL WALI Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30 TITANIC shows 9:30 PM LONG KISS GOODNIGHT Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	GALLERIA 2 ABDOUN GRAND OPENING TITANIC Shows: 5:15, 8:45 The film is also on at 2:00 p.m. on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays	GALLERIA 1 ABDOUN GRAND OPENING TITANIC Shows: 5:15, 8:45 The film is also on at 2:00 p.m. on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays	Hisham Yanes Theatre TEL: 4625155 NOW ON DAILY THE GOVERNMENT IN THE SERVICE OF PEOPLE Starring Hisham Yanes and his group For reservations call: 4640155, 4625155
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Austria's Hermann Maier displays the trophy of the overall World Cup winner in Crans Montana March 15. Maier won with 1685 points ahead of his compatriots Andreas Schiffrer and Stefan Eberharter (Reuters photo)



Athletes run across the old Tagus bridge during Lisbon's International Half Marathon. More than 18,000 people participated in the event (Reuters photo)

SCOREBOARD

Evert Cup
Singles Final
Martina Hingis (Swi x1) bt Lindsay Davenport (USA x2)
6-3, 6-4
Doubles Final
Lindsay Davenport/Natasha Zvereva (USA/Blr x1) bt
Alexandra Fusai/Nathalie Tauziat (Fra x2)
6-4, 2-6, 6-4

Champions Cup
Semi-finals
Greg Rusedski (Gbr x6) bt Thomas Muster (Aut)
7-6 (7/5), 6-1
Marcelo Rios (Chi x7) bt Jan-Michael Gambill (USA)
7-6 (7/3), 6-3

NBA			
Seattle	114	Minnesota	80
Washington	83	Charlotte	80
Cleveland	88	New York	85 (OT)
New Jersey	108	Dallas	93
Houston	89	Sacramento	86
Chicago	96	San Antonio	86
Denver	92	Portland	82
Philadelphia	93	Milwaukee	89

Friendly international
United States 2 Paraguay 2

Belgian League			
Sint Truiden	1	Monstren	0
Lommel	2	Charleroi	1
Anderlecht	4	Ekeren	0
Westerlo	0	Genk	2
Antwerp	0	Gent	0

Spanish First Division			
Compostela	2	Atletico Madrid	1
Real Madrid	2	Racing Santander	2

Dutch Championship			
Nijmegen	2	Maastricht	1
NAC Breda	1	Twente Enschede	0
Ajax	6	FC Volendam	0

Bundesliga			
Wolfsburg	1	Karlsruhe	2
SV Hamburg	0	VfB Stuttgart	0
Bayern Munich	0	VfL Bochum	0
B. Dortmund	3	Bielefeld	2
Kaiserslautern	1	1860 Munich	0
B. Moenchgen	0	Werder Bremen	0

Italian Serie A			
Bologna	3	Vicenza	1
Inter Milan	4	Atalanta	0
Juventus	2	Napoli	2
Sampdoria	0	Lazio	4

Scottish Premier Division			
Dunfermline	3	Aberdeen	3
Harts	1	Kilmarnock	1
Motherwell	2	Rangers	1
St Johnstone	1	Hibernian	1

Portuguese League			
Boavista	0	Vitoria Guimaraes	1

Rusedski downs Muster to meet Rios in final

INDIAN WELLS, California (AFP) — Greg Rusedski and Marcelo Rios, the runners-up at the last two Grand Slam tournaments, posted straight-set victories Saturday to reach the final of the ATP Tour Champions Cup.

Rusedski, who lost to Pat Rafter in the U.S. Open final last September, overwhelmed Austrian Thomas Muster 7-6 (7/5), 6-1 with a magnificent service game that included a record-setting 149 mph ace.

Rios, who fell to Petr Korda in the Australian Open final in January, shrugged off a rain delay of two hours and four minutes to oust U.S. upstart Jan-Michael Gambill 7-6 (7/3), 6-3.

Sunday's final, will be the first meeting between the two left-handers.

"I think I have a good chance," Rios said. "He has a great serve. From the baseline he is not that strong. I'm playing really good from the baseline. I've got to hold my serve and see what happens."

On Saturday, Rusedski was invincible on his serve. Muster had only one break chance, and he couldn't make use of it.

Rusedski put 73 percent of his first serves in play, and he won 33 of those 36 points.

"I think when I served really well today, that might have put him off a little bit," Rusedski said. "He didn't get to play too much on my service game."

"One game when he had the break point, was the only game we got to deuce on."

Indeed, Muster called playing Rusedski "sort of half a game," since his serve offered so little room for response.

In the first set he at least managed to control rallies on his own serve, but in the second Muster failed to do that.

"I was a little impatient on my groundstrokes," Muster



Greg Rusedski

said. "I made too many unforced errors at that stage of the match. Because I'm supposed to win my baseline rallies, and he's supposed to win his service game."

In the second set, I just run too much," Muster added. "I wanted to win my points too quickly. Obviously, it takes a little more time to win the games playing from the baseline than hitting aces."

Rusedski improved his return game in the second to complete Muster's undoing. "I managed to lift my game a level," he said. "I got control of the match there."

Of the meeting with Rios, Rusedski said: "If I can continue to serve the way I have been and be aggressive, then I have a good opportunity tomorrow."

Rios had just saved a set point in the 12th game of the first set when the rain hit. When they returned to the

court for the tiebreaker, he never missed a beat, rolling to a 6-1 lead. Gambill saved two set-points with an ace and a backhand down the line, but Rios wrapped up the set on a backhand winner on the next point.

I think it was tough for him to come after six-all to the court," Rios said. "He was playing really good. He came back he make a lot of mistakes."

Gambill earned the first break of the second set to lead 2-1, but Rios broke back immediately.

"I think that was the break," said Rios, who also broke Gambill in the eighth

game when the American blasted an overhead wide.

Gambill, a 20-year-old from Spokane, Washington, was ranked 126th in the world when he received a wildcard into the tournament.

He defeated former world No. 1 Andre Agassi, winner of two tournaments already this year, in the quarter-finals to reach his first ATP Tour semi-final.

"I didn't play a horrible match," he said. "But it could have been better. He's a very good player. Gets to every ball, makes you hit tons and tons of shots. I missed too many."

PASSPORT LOST

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JORDAN

Reuters protests shooting journalists in West Bank

LONDON (R) — The global news and information company Reuters said on Sunday that it was deeply concerned at the shooting of nine journalists by Israeli troops in the West Bank town of Hebron and would seek a full investigation.

Two Reuters journalists, television cameraman Nael Shuyoukhi and cameraman-reporter Mazen Dana, were among the wounded when troops fired on the journalists with rubber-coated metal bullets during clashes in the town last Friday.

"We wish to register the strongest protest over last Friday's shootings in Hebron, which raise disturbing questions over the motives and actions of Israeli soldiers there," Reuters editor in chief, Mark Wood, said in a statement.

ment.

"Journalists covering West Bank violence obviously run risks, but this attack, which suggests targeting of the media, is unacceptable. It necessitates the fullest investigation rather than mere expressions of regret," Mr. Wood said.

The Israeli army has said security forces did not notice the journalists and that it regrets the incident.

"This is not the first time our journalists have been attacked and past protests appear to have had no effect," Mr. Wood said.

"We seek assurances that those responsible will be dealt with and that Israeli authorities will take all reasonable action to prevent a repetition," he added.

The nine journalists, all

Palestinians, had been reporting on disturbances which broke out when Jewish settlers entered the Palestinian-controlled part of Hebron for a protest march. The settlers' action touched off a Palestinian riot.

"Video footage shows Reuters cameraman Nael Shuyoukhi was shot twice while lying on the ground after sustaining a head wound," the Reuters statement said.

"Witnesses say troops fired from a distance of only 20 metres even though the journalists repeatedly identified themselves as members of the media," it added.

Mr. Shuyoukhi was treated for his wounds in hospital and discharged early on Saturday. Mr. Dana, who was hit in the shoulder, received first aid.

Compromise in works over Cook visit to east Jerusalem settlement

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli, British and Palestinian officials neared a compromise Sunday to avert a diplomatic incident over plans by British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook to visit the site of a controversial Jewish housing project in Arab east Jerusalem, officials said.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared Sunday that Mr. Cook's plan to visit the Jabal Abu Ghneim settlement project on Tuesday with a leading PLO figure, Faisal Husseini, was "not acceptable."

His statement, reported in the official minutes of Sunday's weekly cabinet meeting, was seen as a warning that Mr. Netanyahu could refuse to meet Mr. Cook during his one-day visit to Israel and the Palestinian territories.

Mr. Cook has insisted on the visit to Jabal Abu Ghneim, known as Har Homa to Israelis, to signal the European Union's (EU) opposition to Mr. Netanyahu's policy of expanding Jewish settlements on occupied territory.

Mr. Cook, whose government is the current president of the 15-nation European Union, said following a meeting of EU foreign ministers Saturday that "there was unanimous agreement that we should make

clear that we do not support expansion of settlements and I should make that clear in the course of my visit by visiting Har Homa."

Pressing ahead with the plan, Mr. Husseini and Britain's consul general in Jerusalem, Robin Kealy, visited Jabal Abu Ghneim on Sunday to set out the itinerary for Mr. Cook's visit, British and Palestinian officials said.

But the officials said it was likely Mr. Husseini would renounce accompanying Mr. Cook to avoid a diplomatic incident between Israel and the European Union.

"There is a compromise being worked out under which Faisal would not accompany Cook to Abu Ghneim but would meet with him elsewhere in Jerusalem," said a Palestinian official at Orient House, Mr. Husseini's Arab east Jerusalem headquarters.

Israeli officials were also angry over plans by Mr. Cook to meet with representatives of Peace Now, a left-wing Israeli group opposed to Jewish settlements.

Israel's decision last March to build 6,500 units for Jews at Jabal Abu Ghneim sparked a breakdown in Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations which remain stalled a year

later.

Infrastructure work at Jabal Abu Ghneim was completed months ago but the issue of tenders for the construction of housing units at the site has been delayed for months.

The government has blamed the delay on technical problems but pro-settlement groups say Mr. Netanyahu has quietly put the project on hold under U.S. pressure in order to avoid worsening the crisis in negotiations with the Palestinians.

Israel occupied Arab east Jerusalem in 1967 and illegally annexed it as part of its capital. The annexation has not been internationally recognised and under the Oslo peace accords Israel promised to negotiate the future status of the city with the Palestinians, who want to make Arab east Jerusalem the capital of their own state.

Mr. Netanyahu, a fierce critic of the Oslo accords who came to office in June 1996, has said Israeli sovereignty over all of Jerusalem is non-negotiable.

Mr. Cook will visit Egypt and Jordan on Monday, the Palestinian territories and Israel on Tuesday and Syria and Lebanon on Wednesday in a European bid to take a greater role in efforts to revive the Mideast peace process.



KEEPING THE MUSSELS ABOVE WATER: An Indonesian fisherman carries a bag of mussels through a river in a poverty stricken area of Jakarta on Sunday. The country now faces its worst financial crisis in decades, with the rupiah having fallen more than 70 per cent, causing prices to shoot up and high unemployment among the nation's more than 200 million people (Reuters photo)

Erbakan's wife to lead Turkey's new Islamist party

ANKARA (AFP) — With former Islamist Premier Necmettin Erbakan banned from politics for five years, his wife is to take on the leadership of a new Islamist party, the daily Sabah reported on Sunday.

Nermin Erbakan is expected to be officially registered with the new Virtue Party at a scheduled meeting next weekend, and subsequently appointed leader, the report said.

She would be the first woman to play a leadership role in an Islamist party in Turkey.

Anti-Erbakan reformers in the party were unlikely to muster sufficient strength to resist Mr. Erbakan's recommendations on his wife's appointment, analysts said.

Mr. Erbakan's Welfare Party was dissolved by the constitutional court earlier this year for activities running counter to Turkey's secular political system and the ex-premier dropped from parliament and banned from politics.

Qatari emir to visit Egypt to improve ties

DOHA (R) — Qatar's Emir Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani is due to visit Egypt later this month to improve relations with Cairo, a Qatari government official said on Sunday.

Foreign ministry spokesman Fawwaz Al Attiyah told reporters the emir would go to Cairo on March 23 for talks with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak "to iron out differences" between Qatar and Egypt, Mr. Mubarak said.

"I have been invited to form the government," Mr. Mubarak said, adding that he would be sworn in on the 19th of March.

The government formation and this post is a big challenge and responsibility," he added.

A presidential letter to Mr. Mubarak asked him to "seek a vote of confidence within 10

U.N. rights body to study Algeria, Kosovo 'abuses'

GENEVA (R) — The United Nations' main human rights body, which opens its annual session on Monday, will scrutinise abuses worldwide, including massacres in Algeria and violence in Serbia's Kosovo province.

But China, long a major focus of the six-week sitting of the U.N.'s Human Rights Commission, will be out of the spotlight now the United States has joined the European Union in deciding not to push for a resolution on Beijing's record.

Human rights organisation Amnesty International has called on the commission to send investigators to look into the Algerian carnage and the deaths of at least 80 people, mainly ethnic Albanians, in a Serbian clampdown in Kosovo.

However, the forum — perennially hamstrung by the political and trade alliances of its 53-member states — may not reach consensus on exactly how to tackle either situation.

Amnesty has urged the commission to appoint a special rapporteur on Algeria who could visit the country with U.N. investigators on torture and extrajudicial executions

Ten people killed in Algeria — report

ALGIERS (AFP) — Ten people were killed and five injured when gunmen fired on a crowd in a souq, or market, at Sidi Bakhti, southwest of Algiers, the daily La Tribune said Sunday. The gunmen were apparently preparing an ambush when they were spotted by residents and began firing into the crowd on Thursday, the paper said. After the attack the security forces began searches which were still going on. La Tribune said. Security services neither confirmed nor denied the report Sunday.

and be backed up by forensic experts.

Violence erupted there in 1992 after the authorities cancelled a general election dominated by radical Islamists. Western estimates say more than 65,000 people have died since.

Diplomats said that with the Algerian government arguing that the problem was an internal affair, it would be difficult to garner Third World support for a resolution. Some expected an agreed chairman's statement — a milder form of censure.

The United States will again table a resolution on the former Yugoslavia, including a section on Kosovo, according to a U.S. diplomat, who said he expected it to be easily adopted.

"Obviously we will denounce the excesses by

[Serbian] police forces and call for calm and a peaceful resolution of the dispute. But we will reaffirm the territorial integrity of Serbia-Montenegro," he added.

Other countries who will be in the dock include "usual suspects" Burma, Cambodia, Cuba, Iran, Iraq and Sudan, but the democratic republic of Congo, formerly Zaire, Indonesia, Mexico and Nigeria are also likely to be under scrutiny.

China has fought fiercely and successfully for the last seven years — using diplomatic and sometimes overt political pressure — to head off formal censure in resolutions sponsored by the EU and the U.S.

Grooving ghouls open Brussels fantasy film season

BRUSSELS (R) — Drooling hunchbacks and purple-haired witches danced with wart-ridden goblins and devils when the 16th Brussels festival of fantasy films kicked off with a fancy-dress fling on Saturday. Growling werewolves, chained monsters and gyrating vampires leached and slavered over white-skinned maidens as they swirled across the dance floor. Growing bigger every year, the annual Brussels international festival of fantasy, thriller and science fiction films plans to screen 88 full-length feature films and 49 shorter films.

Curing baldness from top to tail

LOS ANGELES (R) — At 14 years of age Jimmy got a little depressed when he found himself going bald. But a new product is helping him grow his hair back, and he's friskier. No, Jimmy is not a member of the Hair Club for men. He is an elderly Maltese dog, one of an estimated 50 million dogs and cats in the U.S. suffering from problems with baldness. Now a new product called Ichstick is offering hope. "He used to chew off his fur until it bled," said Jimmy's owner, Norma Lindquist. "After about three weeks with Ichstick, the fur is growing back."

British prince prefers to eat Italian

LONDON (AFP) — Prince Charles has angered Britain's food experts by saying he prefers Italian food to traditional British fare. In a contribution to a book honouring the nation's cuisine Charles turned his nose up at British roast beef, leg of lamb and saddle of veal and opted for Italian basil and pine nut loaf, and gnocchi with pesto. The publishers of "Culinary Tour Around the World" had made some changes to account for Charles' tastes. The introduction to the British section reads "British cuisine is now so eclectic that we include some Italian recipes." Book editor Wendy Hobson said his choices were "insulting to British cuisine."

Lewinsky like El Nino for stirring storm

WASHINGTON (R) — Somehow it had to be done. El Nino and Monica Lewinsky, the headline-grabbing stormy sensations that blew in from the west, have been linked. Senator Tom Daschle drew them together, defending U.S. President Bill Clinton against Republican claims that he has been too distracted by the sex scandal to do his job. "Monica Lewinsky is the legislative equivalent of El Nino... if they [the Republicans] wanted to get things done, they could do them. There is nothing that prevents them... [The Lewinsky scandal] is just a convenient excuse like El Nino is in other parts of the country," he said.

DiCaprio the new James Dean — magazine

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Denied an Academy Award nomination despite a leading role in the blockbuster hit "Titanic," actor Leonardo DiCaprio is fast becoming the biggest screen heart-throb in the U.S. Newsweek magazine has dubbed him "America's newest teen idol," comparing the "dreamy, cute" DiCaprio — with his sweet smile, blue-green eyes and blond hair — to the late James Dean. Thousands of Internet pages chart his tastes, astrological sign and public appearances, while fans sing his praises in online chat rooms.

Mossad agents tried to bug Islamist activist's home in London — paper

Combined agency dispatches

THREE MOSSAD agents recently tried to bug the home of a prominent Islamist activist in London, according to unnamed Israeli intelligence sources cited in the British press.

A unnamed senior Mossad source told The Sunday Times that the operation was aborted after the agents were seen behaving suspiciously by British police.

The London operation was part of an attempt to monitor the activities of Islamist organisations in seven European cities last month.

Intelligence sources say Islamist activists in Paris, Rome, Athens, Madrid and Geneva were also targeted for bugging. Most of the other missions were successful, the sources said.

Mossad, Israel's main intelligence service, sent agents to London from its Paris station to target a man believed to be a member of the Shiite Islamist Hizbullah, the source said.

The operation failed, however, only a few days before four Mossad agents were arrested near Bern, the Swiss capital, trying to bug another Shiite Islamist leader's home.

Scotland Yard said it had no record of anyone being detained or deported on suspicion of planting bugs.

Israeli cabinet approves new Mossad chief

Meanwhile, British-born Efraim Halevy, a veteran at both Israeli diplomacy and espionage, won approval from the Israeli cabinet on Sunday to head the troubled Mossad spy agency.

Mr. Halevy, Israel's ambassador to the European Union and a former Mossad deputy chief, was named by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to head the agency on March 4. A cabinet statement said Mr.

Halevy would take over from Danny Yatom, who resigned last month amid scandals over botched missions in Jordan and Switzerland.

No date was announced for the handover.

The once-celebrated Mossad has been rocked in recent months by a failed attempt to kill an Islamist Hamas leader in Amman and the botched bugging of a home in the Swiss capital Bern.

Mr. Halevy has already begun a media charm campaign to revitalise the beleaguered agency.

General Amirun Levine, the army's northern front commander and overall head of Israeli forces in south Lebanon, will serve as deputy Mossad head. The statement did not say if Gen. Levine's appointment was approved.

Israel on Sunday denied the report by the Sunday Times newspaper of Britain that in another affair, three agents of the Mossad tried to bug the home of a prominent Islamist activist in London.

United Arab Emirates opens first specialised defence show in Middle East

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Emirati Defence Minister Sheikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum on Sunday opened a five-day arms show in which the world's top defence manufacturers are showing off the latest in electronic warfare and communications systems.

More than 200 exhibitors from nearly 20 countries have gathered under one roof for the Triple International Defence Exhibition (TRIDEX) which is to be held every two years, alternating with a full-scale arms show known as IDEX.

fare and communications. TRIDEX also features logistics and medical equipment, simulation and training. It is the first of its kind in the Middle East.

"We have isolated these three areas which are of particular interest to the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Middle East and Asia," Brigadier Staff Sultan Al Suwaidi, chairman of the organising committee, told reporters.

The organisers have also invited dozens of official delegations, including chiefs of staff and decision-makers in defence production and in-

vestment. Britain's Defence Minister George Robertson is due to attend the first two days of the show.

Lured by the huge defence spending plans of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the largest foreign participation comes from Europe, notably Britain and France. Russia's state-owned arms corporation Rosvooruzhenie is also well-represented at the indoor exhibition.

Among the U.S. participants are Lockheed Martin, which a senior U.S. official said last week was set to win a lucrative contract for the sale of F-16

fighters to the UAE.

But there has been no confirmation from Abu Dhabi of the deal for around 80 fighter aircraft that is estimated to be worth between 6 and 8 billion dollars.

The F-16's rivals are the Rafale built by Dassault of France and the Eurofighter, which is made by a European consortium led by British Aerospace and Daimler-Benz of Germany.

Among the other competitors still up for grabs and left undecided from last year's IDEX are bids from Boeing of the United States and the UAE.

of Spain and IPTN of Indonesia for the supply of up to four maritime patrol aircraft to the UAE navy which is in the throes of a major upgrading programme.

Newport News Shipbuilding of the United States and Britain's Vospers Thornycroft have also taken stands at TRIDEX, as rivals in a bid to supply six ocean-capable fast patrol craft in a deal estimated to be worth \$600 million.

"All the main players have to make their presence felt at this exhibition so as to remain in the game. There are rich pickings to be made, although the

Emiratis are taking their time in making any decision," said a defence analyst, asking not to be named.

Among the lower-profile exhibitors, Bosnia-Herzegovina is for the first time outside Europe showing its ammunition and explosives, while Tajikistan has its own stand, separate from the Russian Federation. Australia, South Africa and the Ukraine are also at the show.

In December, the UAE ordered 30 Mirage 2000-9 fighters from France as part of a deal worth some \$3.4 billion that includes the modernisation

of the oil-rich country's fleet of 33 Mirage 2000 SADS.

It was the second biggest military contract between the UAE and France, its main arms supplier, following their 1993 package for the sale of 436 Leclerc battle tanks built by Giat for around \$3.8 billion.

The UAE, which has sought to beef up its armed forces since the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, has spent more than \$8 billion over the past seven years.

emir plans first UA
visit since Doha coup

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